

THE 6^{Pen}
MIRACLES
OF *Co. Bright*
JESUS
VINDICATED.

IN FOUR PARTS.

The FIFTH EDITION.

By the Right Reverend
Pease
ZACHARY, Lord Bishop of Bangor.



L O N D O N :

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The P R E F A C E.

IT is now above twenty Years, since the following Sheets were first printed. They were intended as an Answer to some of the principal Parts of Mr. Woolston's *Six Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour, &c.* which were published in 1727 and 1728, and in which he treated those Miracles after the most ludicrous and outrageous Manner, without any Regard to Truth, and even to the Appearance of it, either in his Criticisms, or his Reasonings, or his Quotations. Such Writings Then alarmed all Good Christians, and several Learned ones employed their Pens to take off any ill Impressions, which (it was feared) his bold Attempts might make on the Unlearned and Unstable. At that time appeared in Print the Four Parts of this Treatise, *The Miracles of Jesus Vindicated*; which have therefore more of a controversial Turn in them, than may be Necessary or Pleasing at present to a Reader, who has never perused those wild and extravagant Performances of Mr. Woolston. However the Printer, now finding a Call for a fifth Impression of them, has furnish'd the Author with an Occasion of reviewing them. In several Passages what seem'd personal, and now-a-

The P R E F A C E.

days unseasonable, has been omitted; that the Arguments and Proofs may be the better attended to: And some few additional Notes have been inserted, which may help to give a farther Light and Strength to what had been before advanced. If this Treatise has already proved, or shall hereafter prove, of Use to support the Truth of Christianity, the Author thinks his Labour to have been well bestowed in the Service of that divine Being, to whose Honour and Glory his Life is dedicated, and his Studies shall ever be directed,

St. Martin's, Westminster,
May 1, 1749.



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T H E
MIRACLES of JESUS
VINDICATED.

PART *the* FIRST.

CONTAINING

*The Proofs of JESUS's Resurrection stated, and
the Objections to it answer'd.*

THE Resurrection of *Jesus* being a Point of so great Importance, that the whole Weight of Christianity rests upon it, it is very necessary that the Truth of this Fact should be made out Clearly, and for that purpose the following Treatise is offer'd to the Reader, who, if he comes to it with Attention and without Prejudice, may (it is hoped) be convinc'd of the Reality of this great Miracle, and be supply'd with a sufficient Answer to the several Objections lately rais'd against it.

THE Objections have been formed from the History written by the four Evangelists, and therefore suppose that they wrote the Accounts, which we now have under their Names; I have the same right to make the same supposal in Defence of *Jesus's* Resurrection, as is made in Opposition to it; and therefore shall forbear to prove what is allow'd in the Question; when That comes to be deny'd, it will receive a Satisfactory Answer; but till then it must be taken for granted, that the Books of the *New Testament* were written by those whose Names they bear, and are handed down to us the same as they were written.

HAVING premis'd this, I proceed to the Proof of the Fact in view, the Resurrection of *Jesus*; which is now made matter of Dispute (it seems) in a Christian Country; but since it is, Satisfaction ought to be given to all Enquirers, whether they seek it

in Sincerity or not. The Books, which make this Enquiry necessary, are too well known to need to be particularly named. In them the Evangelists and Apostles are sometimes represented as *Fools* and *Credulous Men*, sometimes as *Cheats* and *Impostors*: I shall therefore consider the Matter in both these Lights, not regarding upon whom One or Both of the two Characters may fall, if it should appear (as it will) that they don't in the least belong to the Apostles: And for this purpose I must follow the old Distinction (till a better can be found) and say, that, if the Account given us by the Apostles be False, it must have been, either because they were Deceived Themselves, or because they knowingly Deceived Mankind.

I. THAT they could not be Deceived Themselves, in the Case before us, may be proved by the following Arguments.

AFTER *Jesus* was risen, and before he was ascended, *he shewed himself alive* (to his Apostles and several others) *by many Infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty Days, and speaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.* Acts i. 3.

MORE particularly, the sacred Writers make mention of ten or twelve different Appearances of *Jesus*, and intimate that he was seen oftner. He convers'd with them, and gave Answers to their Questions; he Eat and Drank with them, to shew that his Body was a Real one. Luke xxiv. 43. And when they suspected, that what they saw might be a *Spirit*, he bad them *handle him and see; for a Spirit* (said he) *hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have.* Luke xxiv. 39.

AND beyond all this, he submitted to such a close Examination as his Scrupulous Apostle *Thomas* insisted upon; for he permitted him, in presence of the rest of the Apostles, to *feel* the Marks of the Wounds, which the Nails had caused in his Hands and Feet, and which the Spear had made in his Side.

AND for a still farther Conviction, for a Proof which should pass all Possibility of deceiving, he told them (before he ascended up into Heaven), that they should *be endued with Power from on high.* Luke xxiv. 49. and *be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days after.* Acts i. 5. which, according to the Prediction, happen'd to them at the end of ten Days, when the *Holy Ghost* fell upon them, and *they all spake with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* Acts ii. 4.

IN the Certainty of this Event they could not possibly be mistaken; they felt *within* them the wonderful Gift, the Power of speaking Languages till then Unknown to them. They had the same Evidence of their really having This, as they had of their being Alive. And is there any thing in Nature, which a Man can be surer of? Even those, whose Scepticism has carried them so far, as to assert, that we cannot be Certain of the Existence of any Objects *without* us, must in this Case allow, that the Apostles might be certain of what they felt by *inward Perception*,

Perception, and had the same sort of Knowledge of, as they had of their own Existence.

ALLOWING then that they were sure of This, it follows that they were Sure of *Jesus's* having been rais'd from the Dead, and of their having convers'd with him after his Resurrection; for it was in one of their Conversations with him, during that period of Time, that he promis'd them this *Gift of Tongues*; and the fulfilling of the Promise was a full Proof of his having been truly present with them, when he made it.

SO that this Objection will not stand the Enquiry: But still it is said, that the Apostles and Evangelists were Cheats and Impostors, and that they knowingly Deceived Mankind in the Accounts which they have left in Writing.

II. YET, as in the former Case it was proved (I think) to be Absolutely Impossible that they should be Deceived in this great Fact, so in This Case it will appear to be Morally Impossible that they should be Deceivers.

FOR they were at first twelve in Number, one of which Betray'd their Master, and was the cause of his Death; another Deny'd him thrice at his Trial, with Oaths and Curses declaring that he did not know him; and all of them shew'd so much want of Courage, such an Abject Fear, as that they forsook him and fled for their own Safety: Is it then probable in the least degree, that after such Proofs of the Baseness of some, and of the Weakness of all of them, they should be so far from being Suspicious of one another, nay should so far throw their whole Welfare into each other's hands, as all to agree and unite in carrying on a publick Imposture? Could they hope to be more Secure against being betray'd by each other than their Master was, who was the Centre of their Union, and for whose sake they had associated together? Could they be sure that there was no *Judas* still left among them; or that *Peter's* Cowardise, or their own strong Fears would not revive again upon some fresh Occasion? In a word, is it not against all Reason and Experience, that a Confederacy among wicked Men, when once broken thro' Treachery and Cowardise, should ever be renew'd among the same Persons, and cemented again? so that in this view, if they had been Impostors, they must have been the Weakest of Men too; and That (we know) is no part of the Character of such as can carry on an Imposture.

BESIDES it is to be considered, that no Motive can be assigned for their Combining in such a Falshood: It is (I think) universally own'd, that neither Grandeur, nor Riches, nor Pleasure, were what the Apostles aimed at; the marks of the Contrary are too plain to be denied: but yet there are some who think, that they may fairly ascribe it to Vanity and the Love of being Singular; a Passion which, if they find to be strong in Themselves, they may be led to conclude, that it might have been as

strong in the Apostles: But even that Vanity and that Singularity cannot be supposed to have a place Here, for this plain reason; because the Doctrine which they taught, they taught not as their Own, but as their Master's: they were only his Messengers; and therefore, if it succeeded to their Heart's wish, they could expect no Reputation as the Inventors or first Discoverers of it, and they were too many in Number to affect to be Singular in this point: Here then is a Consideration of great Weight in the Enquiry, for if the Objection be strip'd of this suppos'd Motive, it will be Morally Impossible to assign any other.

BUT above all things, it must be insisted upon as a Proof of their Sincerity, that the whole Number of the Apostles unanimously asserted this Fact of *Jesus's* Resurrection, and of their having seen him in all the Circumstances before related. This they did All of them, if History may be believed, in spite of every Opposition and Persecution, even with their Dying breath, and when expiring under the Cruellest Tortures.

THIS is naturally as strong a Proof as a Fact is capable of; for Death is the utmost Trial, the surest Test which human Nature can be expos'd to.

AND it is no Abatement to the force of this Proof to say, (a) "that many Cheats and Criminals have asserted their Innocence" and denied their Guilt in the utmost extremity of Death;" for the two Cases are so far from being Parallel, that they are exactly Contrary; such Cheats and Criminals being tempted to this Denial of their Guilt by the hope of *Saving* their Lives; whereas in the Apostles case the Only hope, that they could have, of *Saving* their Lives was by owning the Falshood (if it was one), and acknowledging themselves to be Guilty, which is just the Reverse of what they did.

NOR can the abovementioned Proof be weaken'd by saying, that there are Instances of Men, who have died for Errors as well as for Truths, and have given up their Lives in a Stubborn defence of Points, which others so heartily Abhorr'd, that they died rather than Receive them.

FOR tho' all this be True, yet of what is it True? of Opinions and Doctrines only, in which Men may be fully persuaded in Contrary ways: but the Testimony of the Apostles concerning *Christ's* Resurrection is a Testimony concerning a Fact, whereof they declared themselves Eye-witnesses; and let any Unbeliever produce one Instance (in all the Records of Time) of a single Man, much more of Twelve Sober and Serious Men, all cheerfully undergoing the most violent Deaths rather than Recant what they Knew to be a direct Falshood. The Author of the *Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour*, Part I. pag. 11. quotes St. *Austin* as telling us, that *such Works as Jesus did might be imputed to, and effected by Magick Art*; but this Author must

(a) Mr. *Woolston's* Discourses, &c. Part 6. pag. 27.

(I think) have known, that St. *Austin* says no such thing, and that we may not doubt about This, he has plac'd that Father's Words at the bottom of his page, (b) from whence it appears, that St. *Austin* says not one word of the possibility of their being effected by *Magick Art*: But only, that there were some Men of such an odd turn, as to ascribe them, tho' well attested, to the Power of *Magick*. Here now is an Attestation of a Fact, made by Mr. *W.* when he probably knew it to be False: but would he persist in This, if a Rope were about his Neck, and he going to suffer for This Falshood? especially, if to Recant, would save his Life, and his Refusal would certainly put his Sentence in Execution? I don't speak this as my Wish, but for Argument's sake only. And we may trust Him to answer the Question, and be Sure that the Reply would be, What? do you take me for a Madman?—And do You take the Apostles for Madmen? Their Writings surely shew it less than His; and therefore we may conclude that Human Courage, or Obstinacy (let them call it which they please), cannot go so far: at least, we are sure, that the Resurrection has nothing near so Incredible in it, as this Supposition has which some have made against the Belief of it.

UPON the whole it may be said, that there is no Fact in Nature, that can be so well proved and supported as This is; for to suppose the Apostles to have been Deceived, is to suppose a thing Absolutely Impossible; and to affirm that they were Deceivers, is to affirm a thing which is Morally impossible, *i. e.* Improbable in the highest Degree.

THUS I have laid before the Reader a direct Proof of this Fact, the Resurrection of *Jesus*; and if a thing be once prov'd in this way, Objections drawn from the Circumstances and Expressions of the History have very little weight against it; because the Ignorance or Inattention of Men may be the foundation of these Objections, and plain Proofs are too stubborn to give way to such little Oppositions as these are.

HOWEVER since Objections have been rais'd against the Reality of our Saviour's Resurrection, and they seem to deserve an answer, because they are drawn from the Circumstances of the Story as related by the Evangelists, I shall endeavour to give a full answer to each of them.

ALL that has been offer'd on this head, may be reduc'd to these four Objections:

THAT *Jesus* did not rise at the time he had foretold.

THAT some of his Disciples did not Know him when he appear'd to them, or they Knew him by such Signs as could be no Sure Marks of its being Him.

(b) *Et si attestabantur Miracula, non desuissent (sicut & nunc mustitant) qui Magicæ potentia cuncta illa tribuerent.* Contr. Faust. L. 12. c. 4, *Tho' the Miracles were attested, there would not be wanting Men, who would ascribe them all to the Power of Magick, as some even now-a-days pretend to do.*

THAT he did not personally appear to the Chief Priests and Elders after his Resurrection, as (they suppose) he ought to have done for their Conviction. And lastly,

THAT the Stone at the mouth of the Grave being Seal'd, and the Seal being broken open, when the Sealers were not present, here is room to suspect a Fraud and Imposture.

EACH of these shall be consider'd in its order.

I §. FIRST it is said, that *Jesus* did not rise at the time which he had foretold; it was not (say they) *on the third day*, for that would have been on *Monday*, not upon *Sunday* or the *first day of the week*: much less was it *after three days*, as one Evangelist expresses it; and least of all is it True (as they pretend) that he was *in the heart of the Earth three Days and three Nights*, which Yet he declar'd he wou'd be, as another Evangelist reports it.

BUT in answer to all this it may be prov'd (as it often has been), that all these Expressions, which are so many *Jewish* ways of speaking, are exactly agreeable with the Event, when they are rightly explain'd.

FOR doing which it must be observ'd, that the *Jews* counted their Days (I mean their Natural Days, or Days of 24 hours) very differently from what We do; for We reckon them from 12 o'Clock at Night to 12 the next Night; but They reckon'd from one Sunset, to the next Sunset, and all the time between them They called a *Day*, just as *Moses* did when he said, *the Evening and the Morning were the first day*, Gen. i. v. and *from Even unto Even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath*, Lev. xxiii. 32. See also *Acts* xxvii. 27. compared with ver. 33. And the *Greeks* seem anciently to have done the same thing; for with them a *Day* and *Night* was called *νοχθήμερον*, in which compounded word the *Night* is named before the *Day*.

ANOTHER thing to be observ'd on this head is, that they reckon'd (as indeed all Nations do) any Part of a Day of 24 Hours for a whole Day: to this purpose an eminent *Jewish* Writer (*Aben-Ezra* on *Levit.* xii. 3.) speaking of the Law for circumcising an Infant on the 8th Day, says, that if the Infant was born but *one* hour before the first Day was ended, it was counted for one Whole Day: And so for the same reason, the Part of the Day that was pass'd, when it was circumcis'd, was reckon'd a Whole Day, if it was only *one* hour, that was pass'd, of the Evening with which that Day begun. Reckoning then that the first Day began on our *Thursday* at Sunset, and ended upon *Friday* at Sunset; and (because our Lord died about three in the afternoon of That Day) reckoning that part of a Day for a whole Day, by this means we have *one* Day; and *Saturday* is on all hands allowed to be another Day; and as the third Day began on *Saturday* at Sunset, and our Saviour rose on the morning following, that Part of a Day is fairly computed for the third Day, and thus the Prediction was fully accomplished.

IT

IT is no wonder indeed, that the Gospel should be contradicted by such Cavillers as these; but there is one, who might have expected better Quarter from them, and that is *Porphyry*, as great an Enemy to Christianity as the Heart of an Unbeliever could wish; and yet this Objection of *Theirs*, against *Sunday's* being the third Day, contradicts their Favourite *Porphyry*, who in his Treatise call'd *de Homericis Quæstionibus* says, Ὁ ἀνθρώπος ἡμέρας ἐπιδημήσας, καὶ τὴν τρίτην ἑσπέραν ἐξελθὼν, τῇ τρίτῃ ἀποδημεῖν λέγεται. καίτοι μίαν καὶ μέσλιν ὅλυν ἐτέλεσεν. *He that is at home in the Evening, and goes abroad on the Morning of the Third Day, is said to be from home on the Third Day; tho' there be only One Day compleat, which is the Middle one (c).* But we want neither *Porphyry*, nor any other Author to prove the Propriety of this Expression; for it is a way of speaking, which We and all other Nations of the World use: What I have said on this head, was chiefly to lead the way to what follows.

THE Expression *on the third Day* is about ten several times us'd in the *New Testament* on this occasion, and therefore must serve for explaining the other Phrases but once or twice at most made use of: such is that of *Christ's* rising *after three Days*; Mark viii. 31. the meaning of which Expression is fairly shewn by what we read in 2 Chron. x. 5. where *Rehoboam* says to the People, *Come again unto me after three Days*, and yet ver. 12. we read that *the People came to Rehoboam on the third Day, as the King commanded, saying, Come again to me on the third Day*: A plain Instance, you see, that both the Phrases mean the same thing (d).

AS to the Expression of our Saviour's being *three Days and three Nights in the heart of the Earth*, Matt. xii. 40. from the foregoing Observations the Account of that is very Easy; for the *Jews* (like Us) had no One word by which to express a Day of twenty four Hours, or a νυχθήμερον as the *Greeks* called it, i. e. a *Day-night* as We might call it. They sometimes stiled it a *Day*, as We do, but at other times a *Day and a Night*. So that we are to understand by the Expression of *three Days and three Nights* no more than that *Jesus* was to be in the Grave three Days (as We should express it), reckoning inclusively the first and the last for two Days, and counting the pieces of Days for Whole ones. And of this way of speaking there is a remarkable Instance in the Book of *Esther*; for tho' in chap. iv. 16. she declares that she would *fast with her People the Jews three Days Night and Day*: yet we find her in chap. v. 1, 4. upon the

(c) Quæst. 14. Edit. Argentor.

(d) So in *Cicero*n. *Tusc. Disp.* i. 47. we read, *Apollo se id daturum ostendit post ejus diei diem tertium; qui ut illuxit, mortui sunt reperti*: and so *Josephus* uses the Phrases $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota\tau\eta\ \delta\upsilon\omicron\omicron$ and $\delta\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon\rho\omega\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota$ as synonymous, which may be seen by comparing p. 643, and p. 986 of *Hudson's* Edition.

third Day at a Banquet with the King and Haman her Adversary.

NOTWITHSTANDING therefore this Objection, it appears that *Jesus* rose from the Grave at the time foretold by him.

2 §. THE next Objection is, that his Disciples did not always Know him, when he appeared to them: or they Knew him by such Signs, as could not be Sure Marks of its being Him.

FOR the obviating of which it may be observed, that, tho' our Lord more than once in his Life-time told them, that he should be put to Death, and should *rise again on the third Day*, yet they then *understood not these things*: Their hopes of a Temporal Deliverer were so strong, and they had built so much upon this false Notion, that, when they saw him Crucify'd, they immediately lost all Heart and all Expectation of ever seeing him again: and in this Consternation, under this Despair of Mind, if he had appear'd to them at once, in such a manner as to put his Resurrection out of all Doubt, it is Probable that their Joy would have been too Excessive and Tumultuous for them to bear: He seems therefore to have chosen rather to discover himself to them by Degrees.

THE first Step towards any Notice of this Miraculous Fact was, that the Grave was found open, and the Body gone.

NEXT they received an Account of his being risen from two Persons, who had the Shape of Young men, but had at the same time the appearance of a Brightness like that of *Lightning in their Countenances*, which gave reason to those who saw them, to suppose that they were not Men, but Angels.

AFTER this *Jesus* appeared to some of his Followers, but it being not yet Day-light (*Matt. xxviii. 1.*) they mistook him for the Gardiner of the Place in which the Grave was, till upon looking more narrowly at him, they saw him to be their Master; but *he presently withdrew himself*, leaving them little more than a Glimple or bare View of his Person, as not designing yet fully to convince them of the Reality of his Resurrection.

AT another time he appeared to *Two of the Disciples*, as they were on their Journey to *Emmaus*; but it was (as the Evangelist says) *in another Form*, *Mark xvi. 12. i. e.* another than what they had been used to see him in, probably in the Dress of a Traveller, for it is said that *he went into the Country with them*. This Circumstance, therefore, together with the Dusk of the Evening (at which time it happened), and the Despair they were in of ever seeing him again, might contribute towards what is said of these two Disciples, that *their Eyes were holden, that they should not know him*, or rather (as it may be rendered), *so as they did not know him*, *Luke xxiv. 16.* till upon entring with him into an house, and sitting down with him to Supper, *their Eyes were open'd, and they knew him. ib. 31.* which discovery the bringing in of Lights for their Meal may probably have occasion'd; at least this is a better account of the matter than the fanciful Supposition,

position, which Mr. *W.* has advanced, as if *Jesus* was then discover'd by an habitual Motion and Action of his hand in breaking of bread. At this time tho' he gave to those Disciples a farther proof of his being risen, yet there were only Two present, and he chose to stay a very little time with them after he was known to them; for it is said that *he straightway vanished out of their Sight*, or rather (as it is in the Margin of our Bibles) *he ceased to be seen of them*: by which no more need be meant than that he left their Company and went away, without doing any thing more than is naturally in the Power of Bodies to do; just as the word *disappear* (an Equivalent one) is us'd by *Milton*, Book VI. 414.

*Satan with his Rebellious disappear'd,
Far in the Dark dislodg'd.*

Where it is not meant, that he made himself Invisible, but that he withdrew out of sight.

IN all these Appearances of our Saviour to his Disciples, there is no Christian who pretends that he gave them a Full and Satisfactory Proof of his Resurrection: They were but so many Steps to lead them on; they were only the Degrees by which he chose to prepare them for a farther Discovery, and are therefore (I think) a good Reason why more than once the Disciples were not aware of his being their Master.

AND when, after all this, at another Appearance of his *they supposed, that they had seen a Spirit*, ib. ver. 37. he went a greater Length towards convincing them, by shewing them his Hands, and his Feet, and his Side; and appealing to them, whether a Spirit had Flesh and Bones, as they saw him have.

THE last Satisfaction, which he gave them in this particular, and which (as the Story relates) put an entire end to All Doubt among them, was his allowing the Apostle *Thomas* not only to see, but to handle him, and feel the marks in his Side, his Hands, and his Feet, which the Nails and the Spear had made, when he was on the Cross: Upon This they were all fully convinced; and every time afterwards, when they saw Him, they made no Scruple to own and receive him as *Jesus* risen from the Dead.

IF it can be made (*e*) clearly appear, that, after this ample Discovery, any of his Apostles did not know him, when he was

(*e*) It may be thought, that This does appear from what *St. Matthew* says in chap. xxviii. 17. *And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.* But I think, that such a Conclusion should not be made from this Passage: For those eleven Disciples, when they first saw *Jesus* on that Mountain in *Galilee*, where he had appointed them to be, saw him at a Distance, and probably it was at no small Distance; it being said in the next Verse, that (after they had seen him) *he came and spake unto them.* Those therefore among the eleven Disciples who doubted, did so, most probably, only because the Distance, at which they saw him, did not exhibit him clearly enough to their Sight.

Present

Present with them, there will be some weight in the Objection; but at present every Instance, that has been given of such Behaviour in them towards their Master, is taken from those Appearances of his which were prior to the above-mention'd one, when *Thomas* (the last of the Apostles who stood out) received such strong Conviction.

AND is it fair Dealing to pass over those Later appearances, in which the Apostles declare that they had full evidence, and to object his Former Imperfect appearances as not Satisfactory? Why, the Apostles acknowledge that at First they believ'd not; but the same Writers say that they believed Afterwards, and give us their Reasons for it: and shall the One Story of the Apostles be credited, and the Other not?

I can see no Reason why these Objectors should like their Testimony in the First case better than that in the Last, except it be that they were then *Unbelievers*; That perhaps They may look on as Merit, and reckon that the less Faith they had, they deserv'd the more Credit. But is it not strange, that in such a Case a man's Evidence should be turn'd against himself?

I met an old Acquaintance t'other day in *Westminster-Hall*, whom I did not know at first; I was talking with him for some time, 'till at last recollecting myself I called him by his name, and we immediately knew each other, and fell to discoursing upon several things that had formerly passed between us, and upon the Circumstances and Welfare of several of our Common Friends. Shall any one tell me now, that this man was *not* the old Acquaintance that I took him to be, and use for his Argument, That I did not know him at First? What's that to the purpose? I knew him before we parted, and knew him by such Sure Marks, as I could not be Deceived in. There are few men of so cool Tempers as not to be provok'd at such an Arguer as This; and what He might call a Conclusion of his Own Reason, They would look upon as an Affront to Theirs. But I have done with this Objection, and proceed to

3 §. THE Third which I mentioned to have been made against the Truth of *Jesus's* Resurrection, and which was, that He did not personally appear to the Chief Priests and Elders, as some say he ought to have done for their Confutation.

BUT if I shew that This was not only *not necessary to be done*, but that there are good Reasons assignable why it should *not have been done*, a sufficient Answer will be given to this Objection.

IT was *not necessary* to be done, because the Chief Priests and Rulers had seen enough to convince them fully that *Jesus* came from God, if they had not been blinded with the most obstinate Prejudices: They had been Eye-Witnesses to many of his Miracles, and had but very lately (at his Death) seen *the Veil of the Temple rent in twain*, and *Darkness over the whole Land*: This would have been a full Proof to Them, if they had not been resolutely bent against admitting any.

BUT

BUT supposing that *Christ* had appear'd to them, and that they had believed upon seeing him alive after his Resurrection, what would have been the Consequence? Why, all the Proof of this Fact, which they could have given to others, would have been their Testimony only; and Testimony We have Now for it, That of the Apostles, Twelve in number, who said that they All saw him, and not only said this, but wrought Miracles, and laid down their Lives in Attestation to the Truth of their Report. And could the Chief Priests and Elders (if they had been convinced) have done more than This for the convincing of Others?

LET us farther suppose, (*f*) that Their being convinced would have carried such Weight along with it, that not only all the Priests and Rulers, but the Body of the *Jewish* People would have been converted upon Their Testimony: And let us suppose, that upon this the Apostles or any other *Jews* had set out for foreign Countries, preaching the great Doctrine of *Jesus's* Resurrection, insisting upon This Proof of it, that not only They themselves, but the Chief Priests and Elders had seen him, and that the whole Nation was fully persuaded of the Truth of it; and producing Certificates to that purpose under the Hands and Seals of the great Council or *Sanhedrim*. If This had been the Case, can we think, that those, who now make Objections to the Testimony of the Apostles, would not have made much Greater and Stronger Objections to the united Testimony of the Nation? Would not they have found more room to suspect an Imposture, than they can Now? Would not they have called it a State Trick, a Political Craft, a National Contrivance of the *Jews*, to patch up their Credit after they had so long talk'd of their *Messiah* that was to come? Would not that have been objected (which Now cannot), that a Fraud might easily have been carried on under the Shelter of the *Jewish* Magistracy? If all the Power of Authority in Religion had been on the side of this Fact, might it not be suspected that such, as were Curious and Inquisitive to examine things to the Bottom, were intimidated and discourag'd from the Attempt? Would not such a general Union in Belief have passed with these Objectors for a General Conspiracy? And would not they have cry'd down the Fact, because it *had* This Circumstance attending it, much more justly than they now cry it down, because it *wanted* it?

PROVIDENCE takes its own Measures; we are not to prescribe to it which way was best or wisest: whatever method it

(*f*) See this Argument very largely and very clearly handled in two Pamphlets publish'd since the first Edition of this Treatise; the one entitled, An Impartial Examination and full Confutation of the Argument brought by Mr. W's Rabbi, &c. The other, An Enquiry into the Force of the Objection against the Resurrection of Christ, from the Circumstance of his not appearing openly to the Rulers and People of the *Jews*, &c.

should

should have pleas'd Heaven to take, it would not have fail'd to put its Designs in Execution; but in the View wherein I have plac'd things above, there would have been ample Scope for Cavil, a large Field to sow the Tares of Doubts and Difficulties in. But will a Rational Man admit that for an Objection, which is liable to more and greater Objections? Fy upon such Free-thinking! which marrs instead of mending, and like the new Piece put into an Old Garment, *makes the Rent worse*. Mat. ix. 16.

SO that all things consider'd, it was so far from being Necessary, that *Christ* should have appear'd upon his Resurrection to the Chief Priests and Rulers of the *Jews*, as has been suggested; that (according to all the ways of Thinking which these *Cavillers* are us'd to) he ought *not* to have appear'd to them. And God must be allow'd to have taken a more Unexceptionable Method in making this Fact evident to a Few Men only, and those of no Figure, Character or Reputation in Life, except (as the Event shew'd) for their Courage and Sincerity.

4 §. THE last Objection which I mentioned runs thus: The Stone at the Mouth of the Grave being Sealed by the Chief Priests, and the Seal being broken open, when they were not Present, here (say some) is room to suspect a Fraud and Imposture.

BUT to make this Objection of any Weight, they must suppose, that the Apostles, who were the chosen Witnesses of the Resurrection, as well as the Chief Priests, who were the Deniers of it, were concerned in the Sealing; and that both Parties consented to this method as a Sure way to discover, whether *Jesus* would rise or not; and that both likewise had engag'd to be at the Opening of the Grave on some Day and Hour appointed.

BUT all this Supposal is not only without foundation, but is directly contrary to the History; for the Apostles all fled for their Lives when their Master was Crucified; and when they met afterwards, they did it with the *Doors shut for fear of the Jews*: Nay, so far were they from agreeing with the Chief Priests upon This or any other Test of his Rising again, that we are told in Scripture, that they did not expect him to rise again, and that for several days after his Resurrection they were *slow of heart to believe it*. And could This Sealing then be a *Covenant* enter'd into by the Apostles? Or could their Consent be *reasonably presum'd* to any Test of a Fact which they never expected to happen?

BESIDES, what Right had the Chief Priests to prescribe any Method for the Divine Power to act in? They *Sealed* the Grave, 'tis true; but the Treasure in it was none of Theirs: it was God's, and might not he open the Door of it, and take out his Own when ever he pleas'd? Where then is the Mark of Fraud, when God, the only Proprietor, was present at the opening of it? There may be Cavil in this, but there is no Argument, till it be made out, that a Fact fully prov'd to Some Men is False, because

because other men have not received all the Proof which they desire. But according to this way of reasoning, it seems to be out of the Power of God himself to make any Fact appear to be True; because while he leaves men in possession of Free-will, they may (under the Colour of Free-thinking) make Objections, and insist upon unreasonable terms of Satisfaction: but these don't influence the nature of Facts, and therefore without any regard to the *Seal* or the *Sealers*, we must assert, that *Jesus* did truly *Rise from the Dead on the third Day according to the Scriptures*.

I have now gone thro' every part of what was at first propos'd, having shew'd by direct Proof that *Jesus* did rise, and having answer'd the several Objections against this Fact, which some have drawn from the Writings of the Evangelists.

THE Evidence then of this Great and Miraculous Action lies fairly before the Reader. I have plac'd it in the Clearest Light that I could, and have brought the Proofs of it into a Shorter Compass than Usual: Both these are great Helps to any Sincere, Unprejudiced man, who would see the Reason of a Christian's Faith and Hope: It appears Absolutely Impossible (according to the Scripture Story), that the Apostles should have been Deceiv'd in this Point of *Jesus's* Resurrection; which is no less than a Demonstration in their Favour: and it appears to have been Morally Impossible that they should have wilfully Deceived Mankind in this Particular: the Circumstances of their Case will not admit of such a Supposition, and the whole Weight of Improbability lies against it, which is the strongest Proof that such a Distant Fact is capable of.

AND will a Wise man think a few Cavils sufficient to determine the Point against such Evidence? When the Proofs are so much Stronger on the one side than the Objections on the Other, are there not greater Difficulties to be met with in Disbelieving than in Believing?

HERE then a Rational Man will take his Stand, and being once convinced that *Jesus* did truly rise from the Dead, from hence he will set out in his Enquiries, and taking this Clue along with him will easily see what Judgment is to be made of some other Particulars in the Gospel, against which Exceptions have been taken: With this Evidence in his hand, he will easily admit all the Miracles wrought by *Jesus*, when Alive, to have been True and Real ones: For the Divine Power (we may be sure) would never have exerted itself in his favour to Raise him again, if during his Abode on Earth he had counterfeited Miracles and imposed on a Credulous Multitude: And if he wrought Undoubted Miracles, will not this Conclusion necessarily follow, That he came from God, teaching the Divine Will, because he made use of his Miracles as so many Proofs of his having a Commission from Heaven?

AND the same must be said of the Application of the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, which *Jesus* and his Apostles declar'd

to

to have been fulfill'd in Him: For however some of them may appear to Us, at this distance of time, not to be expressly determin'd and tied down to His Person, yet no Sense of them can be clearer than what is given them by one who wrought undoubted Miracles, and thereby prov'd himself to come from that God, *who spake by the Prophets*; and therefore *Jesus's* Explication of them is no other than God's Own; and can we desire a better Interpretation?

IN all Enquiries the only way to come at Truth is to set out right at first. There is no Proposition in *Euclid* or *Newton*, tho' never so strictly Demonstrable, but will lose all its Force of Conviction, if a man begins at the wrong end, disjoins the several parts of the Proof, or places them in a wrong and unnatural Order. It is the same thing in Christianity; if a man singles out a Miracle or a Prophecy, and having expos'd, as Artfully as he can, the Literal Story of either, if from thence he forms an Argument, that These don't prove *Jesus* to have come from God or to have been the *Messiah*; he may to weak Understandings seem to say something Material, and may triumph (if he pleases) in the Quaintness of his Objections: For, no doubt, *every* Miracle of Christ Singly consider'd does not Infalibly prove his Divine Mission, nor does *every* Prophecy Singly consider'd point him out for the true *Messiah*. Exceptions may be drawn from the Circumstances of some of them by men dispos'd to cavil, and they may say that at best (when taken in this Separate view) they can only make us Wonder, not Believe.

BUT all this while Truth is Truth, and would appear so, if the Proofs were pursued in their Natural Order: Do but begin aright and follow the Chain of things; and you have Demonstration: whereas, if you Start wrong, or lose the Track, then Doubts and Difficulties meet you at every Turning, and you will soon have a Stock of them to set up with, as a Modern Free-thinker in the bad Sense of the Word.

THIS Question may fairly be asked, If we give up Christianity, what Religion will they give us in the Room of it? Christianity is surely worth something, and a Man would not part with it except to Advantage. Why, *the Golden Religion of Nature* (g) is offer'd us in exchange: but as all is not *Gold* that glisters, it has been prov'd a thousand times, that Natural Religion is not sufficient for all our Wants, that it had one great Defect at least, which the Gospel remedies by promising Pardon and Forgiveness of Sins. But are they in earnest when they talk of setting up Morality for the Standard? If they were, one would think, that they should practise it in their Writings, while they recommend it, and the Example should go along with the Doctrine. But is not the Contrary visible in the Works of most of them? I will instance only in the Author of *the Discourses on the*

(g) Woolston's *Disc.* 6. pag. 28.

Miracles of our Saviour: one Specimen of his Disingenuity in Quotations I have given before in Page 5, which I hope will be referr'd to upon this occasion. To this I add, that in *Discourse I.* Page 25, he says, that *St. Hilary is plain, that there was no such Market kept in the Temple of Jerusalem*, i. e. for buying and selling Sheep, Oxen, and Doves: and for this purpose he quotes these words of that Father, *Non habebant Judæi quod venire possent, neque erat quod emere quis posset*: Whereas this is but a part of a Sentence, the whole runs thus: *Sed neque emere Judæos in Synagogâ, neque vendere Spiritum Sanctum existimandum est; non enim habebant ut vendere possent, neque erat quod quis emere posset*: We must not think that the Jews were able to buy and sell the Holy Ghost in the Synagogue; for they had it not to sell, nor was there any one to buy it. Here he deceives his Reader, concealing from him that the buying and selling mention'd by *St. Hilary* was that of the Holy Ghost, not of Sheep and Oxen, and the Place spoken of was not the Temple but the Synagogue. Is this manner of quoting consistent with Morality?

AGAIN, he makes *Erasmus* say, that *Jesus could not be zealous against the Profanation of that Temple of the Jews, which was soon to be destroy'd*, Page 30. But the words of *Erasmus* have a quite different meaning, and run thus; *Nec enim illum tantopere commovebat Templum illud mercimoniis Boum, Ovium, Hircorum & Columbarum profanatum: Sed ostendere voluit Avaritiam & Quæstum fore capitalem Pestem Ecclesiæ suæ, quam Templum illud, cujus Religio mox erat abolenda, figurabat. Jesus was not so much mov'd at the Profanation of the Temple by the merchandise of Oxen, Sheep, Goats and Doves; but he meant to shew, that Avarice and Luxury would be a fatal Calamity to his Church, which was figur'd out by that Temple whose Worship was soon after to be abolished.* The Author above-mention'd makes *Erasmus* assign the Temple's being soon to be destroy'd, as a Reason why he says that *Jesus* could not be Zealous against the Profanation of it: whereas *Erasmus* does not say this, much less does he assign a Reason for it: he only mentions the Temple's being soon to be destroy'd, as a Circumstance to shew that the Temple was a Figure of the Christian Church, which was to succeed it.——Was there a greater Difference between *Erasmus* and the Monks of His time, than there is between the True Sense of *Erasmus*, and what this Unfair Author would fix upon him?

SOME other opportunity will be taken to add more Instances of the like Behaviour, but these are sufficient to shew that this great Recommender of the *Golden Religion of Nature*, in his attacks upon Christianity, violates the first principles of Natural Religion, and makes a Sacrifice of Common Honesty to his Zeal against Revelation. If his Morality teaches him no better things, I would advise him not to offer it to the World; it is best in his Own keeping, it may be of great use to Him in raising

Objections

Objections against the Bible; nay it may be a *Golden Religion* to him, if by the help of it he can furnish his Discourses with such bold Falshoods as shall make them Sell the better. But to all Serious Men, to all who enquire and examine into every Hardy Assertion, his Book is their Antidote; by seeing what He is, they learn what such men as have cast off the Gospel are likely to be: He is the strongest Proof against Himself that Christianity is Necessary to restrain men, and there is nothing in his Writings of so much Weight to incline men to be Unbelievers, as there is in his Example to shew them the Necessity of Believing.

A Man must be much in Love with Variety, and wear his Religion, like his Clothes, subject to every Change of the Fashion, if he will quit the Christian Faith, and renounce his Creed for an uncertain Something, so ill supported and so ill recommended as the Religion of these Disputers. When they have demonstrated the Falshood of Christianity, or shewn us that the Objections against it are of more Force than the Proofs for it, then we may allow them (after great Examples in other cases) to spend their whole Stock of Wit and Drollery upon the Subject. But if they must be under a Restraint till then, it will all die with them, and the World will lose the Proof of their Abilities in the Great Art of Ridicule: For as yet the Article of *Jesus's* Resurrection (that Foundation-Stone of Christianity) remains unmov'd by any thing that They have offer'd: They have done their Best, it must be owned, and have said all perhaps that the Wit or Malice of man can devise: But still it can no more prevail against this Truth, than Death and the Grave could against our Saviour; it rises like him, and triumphs over all Objections.

IT is hoped, therefore, that what has been said on this Occasion, will have some Effect to check the increasing Infidelity of the Age; and that men will consider and weigh matters, before they form any Judgment to the Prejudice of that Faith, which can plead Prescription, and (by shewing its Reasonableness) can make that Prescription appear a Good one. If the Proofs that I have brought in its favour are so convincing, as I am persuaded they are, let such men examine their own hearts carefully, and see whether other Motives than those of Reason do not determine them to Unbelief. I pretend not to charge it upon their Vices or their Vanity and Love of Novelty; they Themselves are the best Judges of what that Principle is which influences them: But they must give up the Pretence of Reason in this Case (of right Reason founded upon good Evidence); for This lies directly against them, it blows full in their Face; and that which is the Demonstration of Our Faith, can never be the Foundation of Their Infidelity.

The End of the First Part.

P A R T



PART the SECOND.

CONTAINING,

*A Defence of the Literal Story of JESUS's
driving the BUYERS and SELLERS
out of the TEMPLE;*

AND

*Suffering the DEVILS to enter into the Herd of
SWINE.*



Y former Discourse endeavour'd to establish the Truth of that Great Miracle, the Resurrection of *Jesus*, and in pursuance of that Design, I shew'd it to be Absolutely Impossible that the Apostles should be Deceived, and Morally Impossible that they should intend to Deceive Mankind: The Proofs of these two Particulars were There laid before the Reader in so Short and yet so Plain a manner, that they seem to amount to as full a Demonstration of the Fact in question, as such Matters are capable of.

IN that Discourse it was not attempted to clear the Apostles from the Charge of *Enthusiasm*, because what was There said, when laid together, seem'd a full Vindication of them in this Particular; but since those, who have got a Plausible Word on their side, are fond of making the Most of it, and affect to range the Apostles under a third Class, that of *Enthusiasts*, I shall follow them into this Covert, and try to force them out of it, by shewing how effectually all Suspicion of *Enthusiasm* has been removed from them, by what has been already Prov'd on the Article of *Jesus's* Resurrection.

ENTHUSIASM in its only Proper Sense (when apply'd to Teachers) is the asserting something for Truth upon a Strong but False Imagination of being Divinely Inspir'd: You see then that the Subject, whereon the warm Brain of the *Enthusiast* displays itself, is Opinion and Doctrine only; but the Point in Question between Us was a Fact, viz. the Resurrection of *Jesus*, in which (as then appear'd) it is Absolutely Impossible that they should have been Deceived, they having such Proofs of it, as

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the

the Scriptures call, and I shew'd to be, *Infallible* ones. It must be observ'd that the Evidence, which They had of *Jesus's* being Alive again, was Sensible Evidence, Frequently repeated, and made Good to more of their Senses than One; and that *the Gift of Tongues*, which was the Divine Power *within* them, was only a Confirmation of the Goodness of this Evidence: They did not reason, as the *Enthusiast* does; This I teach for Truth of Doctrine, because I am Divinely Inspir'd; but, This I teach for Truth of Fact, because I was Eye-witness to it, and felt and handled it; and, that my Senses did not Deceive me in that Outward Object, I am sure, because I feel within me the Accomplishment of that Promise, which *Jesus* made to me After his Resurrection.

OR take *Enthusiasm* in its less Proper Sense, and understand by it no more than a Man's being more strongly persuaded of the Truth of any thing than he has Reason for: and extend it (if you please) to Facts as well as Opinions; nay (rather than not allow it room enough to range in) suppose it be an Odd and Extravagant Mixture of being Deceived and Deceiving too; yet the Apostles are Safe, and their Testimony concerning *Jesus's* Resurrection can never be charged with any the least Suspicion of *Enthusiasm*: For my Discourse (if it Prov'd any thing) Prov'd that the Foundation, on which they built their Strong Persuasion, was such as could easily support the whole Weight of the Superstructure: it was shew'd, that the Fact which they asserted for True, was not asserted upon the Force of a Suppos'd or a Real Divine Impulse only, but upon Sensible Evidence of the Strongest kind; such as would have been in all Respects sufficient, tho' Alone, but yet such as was (beyond any other Fact that ever happen'd) strengthen'd and confirm'd by a Divine Power within them: And if we allow, that, even as to Facts themselves, *Enthusiasm* may so far impose upon a man, as to make him believe a Lye, nay to be strongly persuaded of the Truth of it; yet it can never make him work real Miracles (which the Apostles did) in order to persuade others to believe it.

SO that, notwithstanding this Charge of *Enthusiasm*, it must be allow'd that the Testimony of the Apostles is True, when they tell us that *Jesus Rose from the Dead on the Third Day*, as he had foretold.

IF this Point therefore be gain'd (and till I can see something Material offer'd against it, I may presume it to be gain'd), I have laid so strong a Foundation, that no Exceptions to any of the Miracles, which *Jesus* wrought in his Life-time, can be of Weight and Force enough to make a Reasonable and Unprejudic'd Person disbelieve them: For if *Jesus* wrought the Greatest of all Miracles in Raising himself from the Dead, a thing so plainly beyond all the Powers of Nature, a thing so seemingly Impossible, a thing which not only no Human Art could effect, but

but no Human Wisdom could foresee, can there be any Shadow of a Reason to doubt, whether He wrought those Other Miracles, which have such visibly less Difficulties in them, and against which the very best Exceptions must be meer Trifles in comparison of the Former? If before his Death he had plaid the part of a Cheat and an Impostor, is it Conceivable, that God would have permitted him to Rise from the Grave; especially when in Proof of his Mission from God, and of his working Real Miracles, he appeal'd in his Life-time to this Great future Event, and plac'd his whole Character upon his Resurrection? Or can we imagine, that his Disciples, who had such Strong, Sensible, Inward Evidence for the Reality of his having been Alive again, could have any Temptation to forge Other Miracles, and ascribe Actions to him which he never perform'd? Was it not Probable, was it not at least Possible, that they should be Detected in the Falshood of Things, many of which they report him to have done in the most Publick manner, and before Numbers not only of his Followers but of his Enemies? And would not the Discovery of any one Miracle falsly ascrib'd to their Master have been an Invincible Prejudice against the True Miracle, which they witness'd to, and built their whole Scheme upon? The Resurrection, Alone, was a Convincing Proof that he came from God; and a Hundred True Miracles could not possibly have Added so much Weight to the Proof of it, as one False one, Detected, would certainly have taken from it. So that what room was there for Forgery, when the Only Method that the Apostles could use to gain Credit to the Resurrection which they were sure of, was never to report any thing of *Jesus* which they Knew to be False, or rather did not Know to be True?

HERE then is not only a Reasonable Presumption, but a Strong Consequence in favour of all the Miracles which are attributed to *Jesus* in the Gospels: Every Impartial Man must believe the Literal Account of them to be True, and the Miracles to have been Real ones, unless it can be made out clearly, that there is an Absolute Impossibility in any of them. This is the only Case, which will allow us to make a Stand: For it is not sufficient to say, that This or That particular Circumstance seems Absurd, because the Absurdity may arise from our want of Materials for Information: the Objection may owe its birth to Ignorance, and he, who makes it, may have his Share of This as well as his Neighbour. Consider, that above 1700 Years have pass'd since these Miracles were wrought; the Climate and the Language, the Customs and the Genius of the People were very different from Ours; the Story is often told in a Short and Uncircumstantial Manner, and Allusions are commonly made to the History of those Times and to the Situation of those Places, which We are not fully acquainted with. On all these Accounts and many others, things may seem Strange and even Ab-

surd to Us, which were the most Obvious and Familiar to the Natives of *Judaea*.

BUT, if we had no Helps at all to clear up these Matters against Objections, yet we might be said rather to be Without them than to Want them; for there is no Want, where there is a Direct Proof; and the Consequence drawn from *Jesus's* Resurrection being a True Fact, in favour of his Other Miracles being Truly wrought, is what no one can reasonably deny to be a Direct Proof.

HOWEVER, since Objections have been rais'd by Some against the Literal Story of almost all the Principal Miracles of *Jesus*, I am not unwilling to enter into a particular Examination of them, to let the Reader see that the Cavils of these Men are the Weakest and most Frivolous that can be conceived; such as the Meanest Author, that I ever met with before, would not Stoop to make use of; such as in any other Cause, but that of Religion, a Wise man would not think worth refuting: Nor shall the Unfair Arts, which They employ to give a Colour to these Cavils be forgotten in their proper place. I will venture to say, that were These open'd and expos'd to their Readers (as they ought to be), such Writers could never be able to bring any thing into Discredit but their own Writings.

AT present I shall confine myself to the Literal Accounts of the two first Miracles, which a late (*b*) Author has undertaken to Expose; but in what Manner, and with what Success, the Reader will be soon convinc'd.

I. I begin (as He does) with *the Miracle of Jesus's driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*. St. Matt. xxi. 12, &c. St. Mark xi. 15, &c. St. Luke xix. 45, &c. St. John ii. 14, &c.

ALL the Objections which he has rais'd against it are reducible to these three heads.

THAT there was no Profanation of the Temple by Buyers and Sellers, as is pretended.

THAT, if there was, yet *Jesus* could not have executed such a Work as driving them out of the Temple.

THAT, if he Could have executed it, yet it was a Needless Work, because the Temple was so soon to be Destroyed and Polluted.

§. IN Proof of his first Objection he brings the Testimony of St. Hilary, p. 25. that *there was no such Market kept in the Temple*: And for fear lest this should not hold, he quotes St. Austin as saying that *there could be no great Sin in Selling and Buying Things in the Temple, that were for the Use of it, and offered as Sacrifice in it*. But the Reader may remember that I have already convicted Mr. W. of False Evidence in this Quotation from St. Hilary. (See Part I. p. 15.) And yet were This Quo-

(*b*) Mr. Woolsten's Discourses on our Saviour's Miracles. Part I. p. 22.
tation

tation an Honest one, of what Weight could it be? Since the Testimony of the four Evangelists, who were Contemporaries, and upon the Spot, must be preferr'd before that of a Writer, who lived some hundreds of Years afterwards; especially in a Fact of so Publick a Nature, that, if it was False, the Jews in every part of the World could have Detected it upon their own Knowledge, because they went up yearly from every part of the World to the Temple to celebrate the Passover; and therefore could not but know, whether at any Passover, at That particularly, such a Traffick was carried on in the Temple or not.

BUT I will give Mr. W. another Testimony of the Fact, such as even (i) his Friend the Jewish Rabbi shall be forced to allow for a Good one: It is the Testimony of the ancient Jews themselves, who (we may be sure) did not relate the Matter falsely, to serve the Cause of the Evangelists. In the Babylonish Talmud it is declar'd, that (k) forty Years before the Temple was destroy'd, the Great Council remov'd (from the (l) Place where they us'd to assemble in the Inner-Court of the Temple), and sat among the Shops. Count back forty Years from the Destruction of the Temple, and you will find that this Removal was about three or four Years before this Action of our Saviour's, and consequently that there was a Place called the Shops about that time. At the same time one Jewish Rabbi tells us Where these Shops were (m), They were in the Mountain of the House, by which the Talmud always meant the Outer-Court or Court of the Gentiles: And another tells us What they were, when he says (n), That the Shops were an open spacious Place, where Goods were sold, and Money exchanged: And frequent Mention is made there of the (o) Tables of the Money-Changers; upon which Maimonides tells us that (p) he who Changed the Money, was called Trapezita in the Mischna (q). Mr. W. will scarcely (I think) desire a fuller Proof of the Fact than This is.

(i) Disc. V. p. 42.

(k) *Quadraginta annis ante Excidium Domus migravit Synedrium majus, seditque in Tabernâ: (sec. aliam lect. in Tabernis Montis Sancti): Avoda Sacra. Edit. Edzard. p. 61.*

(l) *Migravit Senatus ab exedrâ lapidum cæforum (loco, ubi olim habebatur Senatus) ad Tabernas, & à Tabernis ad Jerusalem. See L'Empereur upon the Codex Middoth. p. 48, 49.*

(m) *Ita enim R. Nathan, Locus erat extra exedram lapidis cæsi in monte ædis, cui nomen Tabernæ. Ib.*

(n) *Nos autem solemus (dicit Elias) vocare locum apertum ad libera spatia, ubi vendunt merces, Tabernam; sic domus ubi mutant pecuniam cum scænore, dicitur Taberna. Ib.*

(o) *Vicesimo quinto die ad mensas sedebant in Templo. Ib.*

(p) *Mensa, i. e. ad mensam, quæ est ante Nummularium sive Trapezitam, qui super eâ accipit (pecuniam), & sic vocant eum, qui permutat pecuniam, Trapezitam in Mischnâ. Ib.*

(q) *Mischna. Edit. Surenhusii. Tom. 4. p. 338.*

BUT he seems aware, that the Fact would be proved against him, and therefore brings in St. *Austin* as denying that This was a Profanation of the Temple: that Father's Words are, *Non ergo magnum peccatum, si hoc vendebant in Templo, quod emebatur, ut offerretur in Templo, and then he goes on, & tamen inde ejecit illos: Quid si Ebriosos inveniret? &c.* Now can any one think, that St. *Austin* meant to contradict *Christ*, and say, that there was properly *no great Sin* in their doing that, by which *Jesus* said that they had made the Temple *a Den of Thieves*? If he had, it would have been one of the Things which he should have put into his *Confessions*. But he meant only, that the Sin was not *so great* an one as some Others are, that it would be worse to be found there a Drunkard than a Seller of Goods: and what he seems thus to Excuse, is only *the Buying and Selling in the Temple Things for the Service of the Temple*, not (what our Saviour charges them with) the carrying on an Unjust and Unrighteous Trade there; so that his Apology for them as Merchants, does not vindicate them as *Thieves*.

BY the Temple here is meant the Outer-Court of it, or the Court of the Gentiles; which (r) *Josephus* (in his Description of the Temple) calls the first Temple, as he calls the Inner Court, where the *Jews* enter'd, the second Temple: and he intimates to us at the same time, that the *Jews* did not look on this Court of the Gentiles as a Holy place: no wonder then, that they allow'd This Use to be made of it, which our Saviour found fault with. But yet this Opinion of the *Jews* concerning this Court was an Unworthy and Mistaken one; for it was a Part of the Temple in general, it bore the very Name of the Temple, and (what is more) it was the only Place that the Profelytes of the Gate, who came up to the Temple, had to worship the God of *Israel* in: for this purpose it was built very Large and Spacious, that it might receive the great Numbers, which the *Jews* had reason to expect to see there; because *Isaiah's* Prophecy (chap. lvi. 7.) runs thus, *Mine House shall be a House of Prayer for all People*: which Prophecy our Saviour expressly (s) quoted against the Buyers when he drove them out, to shew them that their Practice was wholly Inconsistent with the View and Intent of it, which was that Profelytes from every Country under Heaven should come and worship There. It was a

(r) De Bello Jud. L. 5. c. 2. p. 1226. Edit. Hudf. τὸ δευτέρου ἱερὸν ἅγιον ἐκαλεῖτο, καὶ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκα βαθμοῖς ἦν ἀναβατὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου.

(s) St. Matt. xxi. 13. has, *My House shall be called the House of Prayer*. St. Luke xix. 46. *My House is the House of Prayer*. But St. Mark's Words, chap. xi. 17. are the very same with the LXX. Translation of *Isai* lvi. 7. and may be better render'd thus, *My House shall be called (or shall be) a House of Prayer for all Nations*.

great misapplication therefore of this Court of the Gentiles, to use it for *Tables of Money-Changers* and for *Seats of them that sold Doves*, and for *Droves of Sheep and Oxen*, which St. *John* iii. 15. tells us were brought in There, and for which no doubt there were Folds and Stalls to inclose them, and separate the Cattle of the several Proprietors; and if we consider what Prodigious Numbers of all these there must have been in that Court (for *Josephus* (t) says that at one Passover *Cestius* computed near three Millions who came there to celebrate it, exclusive of all those Profelytes who came there to Worship only,) it will be easily conceiv'd how much the Place allotted to the *Gentiles* for Worship must have been crowded and the Room lessen'd; which surely was a great Indecency: but it was a Profanation of it too, because in the midst of the Bleatings of the *Sheep*, and the Lowings of the *Oxen*, and the Hurry and Bustle, necessarily occasion'd by the other sort of Merchandise, the *Gentile* Profelytes were sure to meet with no small Disturbance in their Devotions; and therefore this Practice of the *Jews* was a defeating (as far as they could) the accomplishment of *Isaiah's* Prophecy.

BUT the Case was still worse; for it seems Probable, that the Captains of the Temple, who were Officers that had the Care and Charge of it, let out that part of the Court of the *Gentiles* for Profit and Advantage; and that the Sellers, to make themselves amends for what they paid for their Shops and Stalls, made an Unjust and Exorbitant Gain. This however we are Sure of, that there was an Unrighteous Traffick carry'd on there, for our Saviour (as three of the Evangelists, who relate the Fact, assure us) did not charge them with having made the Temple a Place of Merchants only, but a *Den of Thieves*. In the former Case if there was only an Indecency, yet in This at least it must be allowed, that there was a Profanation of the Temple or Court of the *Gentiles*.

2 §. I proceed then to the 2d Objection, which was, How *Jesus* (if there was a Profanation) could have executed this work of driving them out of the Temple. *It is hard to conceive* (says Mr. *W.* p. 22.) *how any one in the Form of a Man and of a Despis'd one too, (and we don't read that Jesus chang'd his Shape,) with a Whip in his Hand, could execute such a Work upon a great Multitude of People, who were none of them his Disciples, nor had any Regard for him.* And he quotes a *Modern Author* as thinking This the most stupendous Miracle that *Jesus* wrought. He that thought so, we know, was St. *Jerome*, just as much a *Modern Author* as Mr. *W.* is one of the Primitive ones, or speaks their Sentiments: But I will let him see, how it may

(t) De Bello Jud. ii. c. 14. §. 3. p. 107^s. & vi. c. 9. §. 3. p. 1291. Edit. Hudson.

be conceived, that *Jesus* was plainly able to do what he is said to have done, in a Natural way, and without the Help of any Divine Power.

AND here it must be remembred, that *Jesus* was just come up from *Bethany* to *Jerusalem* in a Solemn Procession, in a sort of Royal and Triumphant manner: He was attended on the Road and into the City with a very great Multitude (*Matt. xxi. 8.*), nay with Multitudes that went before and follow'd, ver. 9. and These went along with him into the Temple (as may be (u) gather'd from ver. 15.), and there proclaim'd as they had done on the Road, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, which was one of the Names of the *Messiah*. The Concourse was so great, that all the City was moved, ver. 10. and even the Chief Priests were afraid of him and of the People too, because they took him for a Prophet, and were very attentive to hear him, *Mat. xxi. 46.* *Mark xi. 18.* *Luke xix. 48.* and *xx. 19.* So that in what he did to the Buyers and Sellers in the Temple, he is not to be consider'd as One single Man only, but as at the Head of an Infinite Number of People, all acknowledging him at that time for their *Messiah* and King, and therefore ready to support him in any Reformation that he should attempt. The Traders then might well have retir'd for fear of him whom the Chief Priests them-

(u) The Words are, *When the Chief Priests and Scribes saw the wonderful Works that he did, and the παῖδες Children crying in the Temple, and saying Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased.* Where by παῖδες is not meant Children, as we render it, but *Jesus's Servants and Followers*, those of his Train and Retinue. Thus *Matt. xiv. 2.* *Herod said to his Servants παῖδιν, &c.* and *Luke xii. 45.* *If that Servant say in his Heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants, τοὺς παῖδας:* and so *Luke xv. 26.* from which Instances I gather that παῖδες here signifies those who were the Disciples, Servants, or Followers of *Jesus* at that time: And what the Pharisees said in the following verse, *Hearst thou what these say?* seems to be the same with what they say on this occasion in *Luke xix. 39.* *Master, rebuke thy Disciples.* If the two Evangelists speak of two different times, yet the Pharisees seem to have desir'd him to rebuke the same Persons in both the Evangelists. It is scarcely to be suppos'd, that only Children cry'd out *Hosanna* in the Temple, or that the Pharisees were so displeas'd with what Children only were saying. Besides, the word παῖδες does never in the New Testament signify Children, unless once or twice at most, and then the Age of them is specify'd; the proper word is *παιδιά* or *παιδάκια*. What led our Translators to give the word this sense here, is (I conceive) the Answer that our Saviour makes, *Out of the mouth of Babes and Sucklings thou hast perfected praise;* but the meaning of this is, God has chosen for the praising of him *Babes and Sucklings* in Knowledge, not with respect to their Years; for *Sucklings*, that cannot speak, cannot perfect praise. See *Matt. xi. 25.* where *Babes* are oppos'd to *Wise and Prudent*.

selves

selves feared, as having such Multitudes in his Retinue and at his Command: They did but what was Natural; they gave way to a Superior Force, which it would have been in vain to have Resisted.

IT is Easy now to conceive, how *Jesus* could do this: he was not Then in the Form of a Despis'd man, but rather of a Triumphant Monarch; he was attended with a much greater Multitude of People than there was to oppose him, a Multitude of People who were all his Disciples and Followers at that time, and who had the greatest Regard for him that men could possibly have, they looking on him as their *Messiah*.

I would not be understood, by what I have said above, to mean that there was no Miracle in this whole Affair; for tho' there may have been none, where Mr. W. and his *Modern Author* place it, yet there Seems to have been one (tho' the Evangelists don't call it so) in the Unanimous Disposition of the People at That time to proclaim *Jesus* by the Title of the Son of *David* or *Messiah*.

THE Fame of his having raised *Lazarus* from the Dead a little before went a great way, 'tis true, (*John* xii. 18.) towards filling Mens minds with this Belief; but yet so Universal, so Sudden, and withal so Short-liv'd an Acknowledgment of Such a Point, looks more like the Effect of a Divine Impulse than of any Natural Causes.

3 §. THE third Objection was this; If *Jesus* could do this, yet was it not a Needless work to be so Zealous against the Profanation of that Temple which was so soon to be Destroy'd? No, because it was not Then Destroy'd: for is not every Place, that is set apart for Divine Worship, to be kept Sacred and Fit for that Use, while it is Subsisting? In such a Case we are to consider what things are Now, not what they are Hereafter to be: for what would have been a Profanation of the Temple, if it had been always to last, was equally Profanation of it, tho' it was to be soon Destroy'd; the Action is the Same under both Events, and is not in the least Alter'd by the Fate of the Place where it is done. 'Tis Ridiculous to talk, or think otherwise. If any Man had Profan'd the Parish Church of *St Botolph Bishopsgate* about four Years ago, and had been Presented for it by the Church-wardens of that Parish, would it have been thought a Reasonable Question to ask, Why those Church-wardens were so Zealous against the Profanation of that Church, which they were then getting an Act of Parliament to empower them to pull down and Destroy? While a Place stands appropriated to Divine Worship, it ought not to be Profan'd; This is the Answer which every Lawyer and every Man of Common Sense would give on this occasion. And therefore the Court of the Gentiles, which was a House of Prayer, ought to have been kept Free and Undisturbed

disturbed for that purpose, as long as it continued to be a *House of Prayer*, that is, 'till it was Destroy'd.

I have not here forgot that Mr. *W.* pushes this matter farther, and says that *Jesus himself came to Destroy the Temple*, and that he *permitted*, nay *commanded it to be filthily Polluted not long after*, p. 23. and this he mentions to make the Inconsistence (as he thinks it) the Greater: But where does he read any thing Like this? which of the Evangelists told him, that *Jesus either came to Destroy it, or commanded it to be polluted?* *Jesus* told the *Jews* indeed in *Mark* xiii. 14. that they would see the *Abomination of Desolation*, but then he adds, that they would see it *standing where it ought not*, i. e. in the Holy place. Now this is only a Declaration of what would happen, and it is observable that this Declaration is so far from being in Favour of Polluting the Temple, that it is directly Against it. Besides, if he had *commanded* it to be done, when the Temple was destroyed, i. e. almost forty Years after his Death, then, when he *commanded* it, he must have been Alive again and Risen from the Dead. Did This Author consider this when he oppos'd *Jesus's* Resurrection? What? Not Revive, and yet Act? I see that for the sake of an Objection to One Miracle, he can for a while allow the Truth of another.

I have now answer'd all his Objections, and I hope to the Reader's Satisfaction. As for his Quotations from the Fathers, I have no mind to lengthen this Discourse with any Enquiry into them: for tho' it is True, that some of them affected to give a Spiritual and Mystical Sense to This and almost all our Saviour's Actions; yet it is as True, that not one of them ever Deny'd or Doubted of the Literal Story, except when He makes them speak; nay the very thing, which he has brought to prove them Unbelievers of the Letter, shews the Direct contrary; for to make any Action a Mystical one, you must necessarily allow it to be a Literal one too; it may as well be said that there are Properties without a Substance, as that there can be a Figure without the Letter, except in Parables. I shall therefore pass by all his Scraps of the Fathers, for every Single one of which an Hundred might be found in the same Author, that expressly contradict what he is labouring to prove. He knows it very well, and therefore has all along made use of the Unfair and Dishonest Arts of Misrepresenting, and Curtailing the Passages of the Fathers; sometimes leaving out in a Sentence what speaks against him, and sometimes bringing Sentences together which have no Relation to one another. Some Instances I have given already, and shall here present the Reader with One more. At the bottom of p. 26. he quotes St. *Jerome* thus, *Juxta simplicem Intelligentiam* — *quod penitus absurdum*, &c. and explains them above by making That Father say, *there are absurdities in the Letter*. But let St. *Jerome's* words be fairly produced, and they will run thus,

thus, (x) According to the *Literal Sense* the Doves were not in the Seats (Chairs) but in Coops; unless perhaps the Sellers of the Doves sat in Chairs, which is wholly absurd to say, for Chairs are Marks of Honour to distinguish Masters and Teachers. This Father, as many Others did on other words, quibbled (poorly enough) upon the word *Cathedræ*, by which is meant in the Gospels the Seats of them that sold Doves, but which He applied to the Chairs, that the Teachers of the Christian Church then us'd, as We do our Pulpits: and the *Absurdity*, which St. Jerome finds, is in the supposing that the Sellers of Doves sat in such *Cathedræ*, as the Teachers of his Days made use of. He does not say a word of any *Absurdity* in the Letter, or *Literal Account* of Jesus's Action; tho' by dropping the Greatest and most Material part of the Sentence Mr. W. has contriv'd to make the Words which is wholly absurd to seem understood of the *Literal Sense*. If such Authors as He did not seek for Truth, if they sought only to establish Falshood, yet methinks they should avoid a Fraud so easily detected, and (to use Archbishop Tillotson's Words) should be *Honest*er than This comes to, out of very Knavery.

BUT before he leaves this Head, he attempts to play the Critick on the Sense of the words, in which the Evangelists relate this Action of Jesus: and here he seems to improve in his happy Art of making the Authors he quotes bear *False witness*, for tho' he Mistakes as usual, he Falsifies rather more.

INSTEAD of them that sold and bought (says he, p. 30.) it should be rendred them that sold and preached; for the word ἀγοράζουσιν doth more properly signify to preach than to buy. It is so far from signifying this more properly, that it does not either in the New Testament, or (I believe) in any Author, signify so at all. The word is used above thirty times in the New Testament, and let him shew where it can once be understood of preaching: When it is said, Luke xvii. 28. of that wicked Generation, who would not hearken to Noah the Preacher of Righteousness, and upon whom therefore the Flood came, They did eat, they drank, they sold, they ἡγοράζον; are we to suppose that they were preaching? or when the Wise Virgins said to the Foolish ones, Matth. xxv. 9. Go ye to them that sell, and ἀγοράσατε ἑαυταῖς, can we think their Advice to have been, that they should preach to themselves?—Is this Criticism?

BUT then he has found a new Sense for κολλυβίσται, or Money-Changers; the Greek word (says he p. 31.) imports those who have a Knack to barter away a little Base and Brass Money with the Effigies of an Ox or Bull on it, in exchange for good Coin.

(x) *Juxta simplicem Intelligentiam Columbæ non erant in Cathedris, sed in Caveis; nisi forte Columbarum insitiores sedebant in Cathedris; quod penitus absurdum est, quia in Cathedris Magistrorum magis Dignitas indicatur.* Hieron. in Matt. xxi.

And for this Sense of the word he quotes Suicerus's *Thesaurus* in voce ΚΟΛΛΥCΙCΙC. 'Tis so common a Book, that Mr. W. might have expected to be found out in any False Quotation from thence: Suicerus quotes *Theophylact* to shew that the *Collybus* was a small piece of Brass Money, of little value, with the Effigies of an Ox, βὲς, on it; (not of a Bull; that's an Insertion of Mr. W. for the sake of a Jest); and he gives us this for his Own Opinion, that (y) the ΚΟΛΛΥCΙCΙC or Money-Changers were such as sold, or gave, by way of Exchange, small pieces of Brass for other Money, I suppose, for Gold and Silver Pieces. But is this the same with giving *Base* (or *Bad*) Money for *Good*? Are not Twelve Pence in Copper as *Good* Money as a Shilling in Silver? Does the Baseness of the Metal, or Smallness of the Piece alter the Matter, when it is made up in Quantity? I am sure, that This Author is a thorough *Collybist* in his own Sense of the word, and puts off very *Base* Quotations for *Good* ones.

ONCE more, and I have done with Mr. W. on this Head: To make all this the more applicable to the *Hireling Clergy* of This Age, for whose sake he has brought in his *Preaching* and his *Bulls*, he says, p. 31. If *τεγπέζας*, which is translated *Tables*, does properly signify *Pulpits*, who can help it? For this he refers us to *Scapula's* Quotation from *Aristophanes*: *Scapula's* words are these, (z) *Aristophanes* uses this word to signify a *Pulpitum*, or *Place* rais'd higher than ordinary, on which the *Slaves* that were to be sold were expos'd to view. Mr. W. you see stop'd half way in the Quotation, that he might deceive the Reader into an Opinion, that *Pulpitum* signifies there a *Pulpit*; but when the whole Sentence is produced, it appears to signify something as different from it, as *Dishonesty* is from *Good Policy*.

II. THE Second Miracle of *Jesus*, to which Mr. W. has made Objections, is that of his permitting the *Devils* to enter into the (a) *Herd* of *Swine*, which thereupon ran down a *Precipice*, and were all chok'd in the *Sea*, p. 32.

AND here I must remind the Reader, that in *Facts* done so Long since, and reported in so Brief a manner, it must often happen, that there can't possibly be any certain account given of some Particulars; and Then, where a Probable one is offer'd, consistent with the Circumstances of the Story and with what other Historians relate, This is all that can be expected in the matter. In this Miracle before us, I promise that no Answer

(y) *Reclē ΚΟΛΛΥCΙCΙC* definiuntur οἱ τὰ λεπτὰ νομισματα πωλῶντες. qui vendunt Minuta æra pro aliâ pecuniâ, scilicet accepto *Collybo*.

(z) *Apud Aristophanem* sic vocatur *Pulpitum* aut locus editor, in quo *Vernæ* & *Mancipia* omnium oculis venum exponebantur. *Scapula* in voce *τεγπέζας*.

(a) See *St. Matt.* viii. 28, &c. *St. Mark* v. 2, &c. *St. Luke* viii. 26, &c.

shall be given, which does not seem much more Reasonable than any Objection on the other side, even supposing it not to have been prov'd already that *Jesus rose from the Dead*; tho' I hope it will be remembred here, that, if (as I shew'd Part I.) *Jesus* did really Rise again, it follows that he came from God, and that the Miracles which he is said to have wrought in his Life-time were Real ones; and This here being reckon'd by the Evangelists as One of the Number, with all Fair and Reasonable Men, their Inclination to believe Every part of the Literal account of it, should at least be Stronger than to disbelieve Any.

THE Objections, which Mr. *W.* has rais'd against the Literal Story of This Miracle, are these Four.

HOW came those Mad-men to have their Dwelling in the Tombs of a Burying-Ground? p. 32.

WHERE was the Humanity of the *Gadarenes*, who did not take care of them, in Pity to Them as well as for the Safety of others? p. 32.

HOW came there to be any Herd of Swine in that Country, when the *Jews* were forbidden to eat Swines Flesh? p. 33. Or,

IF the Swine belong'd to Gentile *Gadarenes*, with whom it was Lawful to keep and eat them, where was the Goodness and Justice of *Jesus's* permitting the Devils to enter into a Herd of them to their Destruction? p. 34.

THESE are his four Objections against this Miracle, and I shall take them in their Order.

§. HOW came those Mad-men to have their Dwelling in the Tombs of a Burying-Ground? The true Language of which Question is this, Can you give a Reason for the Actions of Mad-men? They were Mad-men, and Therefore they stroll'd thither. But this Objection looks a little like a Reasonable One, because Mr. *W.* has added the words of a Burying-Ground; by which, if his Reader understands something resembling our Church-yards in Cities and Towns, and adjoining to the Church, he is Deceived; for as it is said that those Mad-men were among the Tombs, so it is said that they were in the Mountains, and in the Wilderness or desert Places. To understand which you must observe, that the Jewish Tombs were usually little Cells cut in the Sides of Caverns and the Hollow parts of Rocks and Mountains, at some distance from the Towns, and in lonely desert Places. The Sepulchre, that *Jesus* himself was laid in, was hewn out of a Rock in Mount Calvary; and many such Tombs remain even to this Day, as *Maundrel* and other Travellers thro' *Judæa* have assur'd us. And these Caves often serv'd for a Retreat and Shelter; for in such as these the Kings of *Canaan* hid themselves from *Joshua*, *David* from *Saul*, and *Josephus* the Jewish Historian from the Romans that pursued him: Nay *Josephus* makes very frequent mention in his History, of whole Bands of Thieves and Robbers lurking for Months together in such hollow Rocks, and making Excursions from thence: and he tells

us particularly, that there were (b) *Dens or Caves* of this sort on that part of the Coast of the Lake *Gennesareth*, which was in the lower *Galilee*, and therefore lay contiguous to *Gadara*.

AND these Mountains as they afforded Shelter, so they might have supply'd the *Mad-men* with Food; for in those Warm and Fruitful Climates They were not so Barren as we see them in Ours: *John the Baptist* (we read) lived in the Wilderness on *Locusts and Wild-Honey*; and *Josephus* in his own Life tells us, that, when young, he went out into the Wilderness to be instructed by one *Banus*, (c) *who lived there upon what grew wild and without Culture*.

SO that I have found Victuals and Habitation for the *Mad-men*; and when it is prov'd that Others did, and They might have dwelt in the Mountains, and among the Tombs, I hope the Assertion of three Evangelists that *Jesus* found them there, will overbear a meer Question unsupported with any attempt towards a Proof of the Contrary.

2 §. Mr. *W*'s next Objection is, *Where was the Humanity of the Gadarenes, who did not take care of them, in pity to Them as well as for the Safety of Others? Can any thing be more Perverse than this Question is?* when St. *Mark* expressly tells us chap. v. 4. that Care had been taken of them, that they had been bound in Fetters and Chains, and that this had been often done to them, but that they had pluck'd them asunder and broken them to pieces. The Fetters and Chains (whatever they were) were not strong enough for Men in their Outrageous Condition; and therefore they gat loose from their Keepers, and retreated to the Tombs and Mountains; where, when pursu'd, they probably hid themselves, and eluded all the Diligence and Humanity of the People who try'd to catch and bind them again.

BUT if This does not prove a Want of Humanity in the *Gadarenes*, he has another Proof, which he is sure is a Good one, viz. that they did not dispatch them, rather than their Neighbours and Passengers should be in danger from them, p. 33. They are equally Inhumane in his Opinion (I find) for not taking care to Preserve them, and for not taking care to Destroy them: But I should have thought this an Argument for their Having Humanity, not for their Wanting it: for while the *Mad-men* were alive, there were Hopes of laying hold on them once more, and perhaps of recovering them to their Senses. If Mr. *W*. had met with this Passage in some People's Writings, he would have rais'd a heavy Outcry against the Barbarity of the Doctrine of knocking a Mad-man on the head, only for fear he should do Mischief. But after all, if the *Gadarenes* could not catch these *Mad-men* to Bind them, how does he know that they could

(b) Προς δὲ τέτοις τὰ περὶ Γεννησάρ λίμνην σπήλτια καὶ ἄλλα καλεσμένην Γαλιλαίαν ἀνετιθέσαστο. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. L. 2. c. 20.

(c) Τερφὴν τὴν αὐτομάτως φουμένην προσφερόμενον.

come up near enough to *dispatch* them? They might (in his notion of Humanity) have a very Good Will to it, and yet not be able to do the Good Deed; for *Josephus* will tell him what Difficulty *Herod*, with an Army, found to destroy a Set of Robbers, that had lodged themselves in such Caves of the Mountains.

AND, to say no more on this Head, if the *Gadarenes* wanted This or any other Instance of Humanity, what is that to the Story? The Truth of this Fact is not affected by it; unless it can be prov'd Impossible that in any Country a Mad-man should be found Unconfined, that is often attempting to do Mischief.

3 §. I proceed then to the third Objection, *How came there to be any Herd of Swine in that Country, when the Jews were forbidden to eat Swines Flesh?* Suppose we could not give any Account of this matter, yet is a Story, (so well attested, as I have shewn all *Jesus's* Miracles to be), to be Disbeliev'd, when there is no Proof against it? I call it *no Proof*, because to say a thing was *forbidden* and therefore it was *not* done, is to suppose that Laws are never broken, the contrary of which is seen every day, and was never more so than in Mr. *W's* own Discourse.

BUT I'll give him a very Fair and Probable account of this Circumstance. *Gadara* was a City on the other side of *Jordan*, near the *Lake of Gennesareth*; it was one of those Cities called *Decapolis*, and was situate in that Allotment which was made to the Tribe of *Manasseh*: *Pompey* indeed join'd it to the Province of *Syria*, *Augustus* afterwards gave it to *Herod*, and upon his Death annexed it again to *Syria*, as *Josephus* informs us: and thus annex'd to *Syria* it remained at the time, when this Miracle was wrought. By this disposition it was Then inhabited partly by *Jews*, and partly by *Syrians* who were Heathens; *Josephus* (*d*) speaks frequently of both, as very Numerous there. But tho' its Inhabitants were thus of a mix'd sort, it was always reckon'd by the *Jews* as Part of their Dominions, and as such it felt the fury of *Vespasian* in the beginning of the *Jewish War* (*e*).

THIS being the State of the Town, and it being well known that the Heathens used *Swine* not only for Food but for Sacrifices too, why mayn't we suppose, that the *Jews* of that Country might feed *Swine*, for the Profit they made by selling them to their Heathen Neighbours? No, (says Mr. *W.* from *Spencer de Leg. Hebr.*) the *Jews* were forbidden, under the Pain of an *Anathema*, the keeping of any *Swine* in their Country, p. 33. It is true, that there was such a (*f*) Law made in the time of *Hircanus*; but why was it made? because the *Jews* did use to keep *Swine*. And is it any Argument to say, that, because a Law is

(*d*) De Bell. Jud. l. 4. c. 7. Ed. Hudf. & l. 3. c. 7. & l. 2. c. 18.

(*e*) Joseph. Antiq. l. 14. c. 5. & de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 8. & l. 4. c. 7.

(*f*) *Cajaubon* advers. Baron. Exercit. 13. Art. 31. n. 69.

made against any thing, Therefore it was not practis'd after? It ought not, I grant, but it does not follow that it *was* not. Have We not Laws, many and strong, against running of Brandy, Tea, &c. and would you argue from thence that no Brandy or Tea is run upon our Coasts? if we could make this out clearly, we might save the Government the Expence of many Custom-house Officers.

IF the *Jews* did once practise this feeding of Swine (as the Law made against it sufficiently shews), I don't see but it may be reasonably suppos'd that they might Continue to do so even After the Law was made: It is well known that there is too much of forbidden Trade among Us, tho' we have more Laws than One against it, and many methods to put them in Execution: and it is much more likely, that this feeding of Swine might be practis'd about *Gadara*, because it was not only upon the Extremity of the *Jewish* Dominions, but was then under (g) Heathenish Jurisdiction, so that the Force of the Law rested upon the Consciences only of the *Jewish Gadarenes*.

I have suppos'd with Mr. *W.* that the Swine belonged to *Jewish* Owners, which I have as much right to do as any one can have to suppose the contrary: and it seems Probable that even those *Mad-men* were *Jews*; for we don't find *Jesus* in all his Travels conversing with and healing any but those to whom he was sent, the lost Sheep of the House of Israel, unless in one case particularly taken notice of by the Evangelists. Upon this supposition, I have shewn it probable, that the *Gadarene* Jews might keep Swine for the Use of their Gentile Neighbours, tho' it was forbidden by Law, and even under the Pain of an Anathema.

4 §. I come to Mr. *W.*'s last Objection, where was the Goodness and Justice of *Jesus's* permitting the Devils to enter into the Herd of Swine to their Destruction?

THERE was no want of Goodness or Justice in *Jesus*, even if they had belonged to Gentiles, who might eat them; for the part, which *Jesus* had in their Destruction, does not appear to be such as made him either Principal or Accessary: it is said indeed by St. *Mark* that he gave them leave, but by St. *Luke* only that he suffer'd the Devils to enter into them. By this may be meant no more, than that He did not Prevent them, that he did not Interpose his Divine Power, by which he might have hindred them from entring: for this Explanation may be justify'd by other Passages of the Old and New Testament, as (b)

(g) Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. i. c. 20. Ed. Hudson.

(b) Vide loca Gen. xx. 6. & xxxi. 7. Exod. iii. 19. & xii. 23. Psalm xvi. 10. Acts ii. 27. Ejicere Diabolum ex homine, Christi fuit Actio; in Porcos ut irent, nulla actione Christi erat opus: hoc enim optabant ipsi Diaboli, & viribus nativis id ipsum efficere poterant, dum ne vi majore impedirentur: Non ergo Christus in hac re vim agentem exseruit, sed vim impedire valentem sustinuit. Grotius in Matt. viii. 31.

Grotius has fully shewn. And if this made *Jesus* a Sharer in their Destruction, it may as well be said, that God is answerable for all the Evil done in the World, nay he will come in for a share in This very Destruction of the Swine, for He too permitted it; and therefore by this Argument I don't see but his *Goodness* and *Justice* will be impeached upon this occasion.

BUT if the *Jews* of *Gadara* were the Owners of the Swine, as I have suppos'd, then there was no Injustice in *Jesus*, even allowing that he was Accessary to the Destruction of them, and gave the Devils such a *Leave*, as assisted them to do what they did: For then the Owners of them kept them against the Law made in *Hyrchanus's* time to prevent it: We find in *Josephus* an Edict of the Emperor *Augustus* requiring the *Roman* Governors, in every Country where the *Jews* resided, to suffer them (i) to live according to such of their own Country Laws, as were in force in *Hyrchanus's* time: From This one may gather, that all Laws made in *Hyrchanus's* Time were look'd on by the *Jews* as binding them; otherwise when they solicited that Emperor for this Edict in their favour, they would scarcely have fix'd on this Time for their Standard: so that by their own acknowledg'd Constitution the keeping of Swine was a Crime, and therefore the *Jewish* Keepers of them were justly Punishable for it. And it is well known, that Prophets or Persons acting by the Spirit of God did frequently among the *Jews* put the Laws in Execution against Offenders, without calling in the Assistance of the Magistrate: nay, it was a receiv'd Maxim among the *Jews*, that such Persons had a Right to act thus, and do much more than This, even to dispense with some of *Moses's* Laws, as might be easily shewn: What *Phineas* did to *Zimri*, and what *Elijah* did to the Priests of *Baal*, were look'd upon by the *Jews* as *Precedents* in this Case; and therefore We Christians, who acknowledge *Jesus* to have been more than a Prophet, can never be at a loss to account for his exercising an Authority among the *Jews*, which they allow'd every Ordinary Prophet to have: and this Answer, as it will satisfy in the present Case, so it accounts for our Saviour's taking upon him to drive the *Buyers* and *Sellers* out of the Temple.

I have now given an Answer to Mr. *W.*'s several Objections against this Miracle: and I hope that it appears to the Reader how Frivolous and Trifling they are. If we had had no Lights from History to help us out, yet a Christian might easily maintain his ground against meer Questions, which are not supported by any Proofs, and which might be effectually answer'd upon several Probable suppositions. But the Authors which I have quoted speak home to the purpose, and both *Josephus* and the

(i) Τῆς Ἰουδαίας χρεῖται τοῖς ἰδίοις θεσμοῖς καὶ τῷ πατρίῳ αὐτῶν νόμῳ, καθὼς ἐχρᾶντο ἐν Ἰερικῇ ἀρχιερέως Θίβι υἱοῦ. Antiq. Jud. l. 16. c. 6.

other *Jewish* Writers, whom I have made the most use of, can never be suspected of any Partiality in favour of the Cause I am maintaining; so that their Testimony, where it helps us, comes with the more Weight, and should put all Cavils under a perpetual silence.

HERE, as in the former case, Mr. *W.* would have us believe, that the Fathers look'd upon this Miracle as only a *Parabolical Narrative*: and he tells us, that *upon the Encouragement of Origen and others we ought to expose the Absurdities of the Letter.* 'Till He can better shew the *Absurdities* of it, than he has done, all the *Encouragement*, which *Origen* and the other Fathers give him, is to no purpose.

BUT where does *Origen* Encourage him to this? Why, he says, p. 35. that *Origen's Commentaries on this part of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospel are lost, otherwise unquestionably he would have told us, that he did not believe any thing of the Letter of this Story.*

IT would be strange indeed, if Mr. *W.* should know what *Origen's* Opinion was in his Writings that are lost, when he always mistakes it in his Writings that are Extant: But I can more unquestionably assure him, that, if those *Commentaries* had been preserved, *Origen* would have declar'd his belief of the Literal account of this Story, because he *has* done it in some of his *Commentaries* which are remaining; for in those upon *St. John's Gospel*, incidentally mentioning the Country of the Gergesenes, where *St. Matthew* lays the Scene of this Miracle (and which is thought to have included *Gadara* in it) he says that (*k*) *Gergesa was an ancient City, near what is now called the Lake of Tiberias, in the Neighbourhood of which there is a Precipice adjoining to the Lake, which is shew'd as the Sheep place, from whence the Swine were thrown down by the Devils that enter'd them.* Does not *Origen* here sufficiently intimate his Belief of the Letter of the Story, when he points out the very place, where it was supposed to have happen'd?

LET this then suffice for a Specimen of Mr. *W's* Acquaintance with the Fathers, or of his Sincerity in reporting their Opinions: I shall examine no more of his Quotations on this head, and indeed I might well dismiss the Subject, having given (I think) a sufficient Reply to all the Exceptions he has made to this Miracle.

BUT it may not be amiss (before I conclude) to add some farther Remarks upon this Story, because there are Some (whose Opinion is of more Weight than Mr. *W's*) who seem to think the Circumstance of Mens being possessed by Devils or Unclean Spirits in our Saviour's Days to be a great Difficulty, and there-

(k) Γέργεςα, ἀφ' ἧς οἱ Γεργεςαῖοι, πόλις ἀρχαία περὶ τὴν νῦν καλεμένην Τιβεριάδα λίμνην, περὶ ἣν χρημὸς παρακείμενος τῇ λίμνῃ, ἀφ' ἧ δέκνυται τὰς χοῖρας ὑπὸ τῶν δαιμόνων καταβιβλῆσθαι. Vol. 2. 131. Edit. Huet.

fore they suspect, that nothing more than Madness is meant by such a Possession; and for this Notion of theirs they quote what the *Jews* said of *Jesus*, John x. 20. *He hath a Devil, and is Mad*, supposing that a *Mad-man* was in the *Jewish* way of speaking called *one possess'd with a Devil or Unclean Spirit*. But the (l) Truth is, that the *Jews* reckon'd this One sort of Madness, and the Worst sort; but they distinguish'd between This and what we properly call Madness arising from some Distemper of the Body: So that tho' they called all Persons possess'd with the Devil by the Name of *Mad-men*, yet they did not give to all *Mad-men* the Name of Persons thus possess'd: And they distinguish'd very rightly in the Case; for in the Instance of this Miracle before us, we find that the Devils Spake out of the possess'd Persons, they were Sent out of them, and they Enter'd into the Herd of Swine: Personal Actions as well as Speeches are ascrib'd to them, which can never be ascrib'd to meer Phrensy and Madness; for had there been nothing more than Madness, then, when it ceas'd in the Men, it would have had no Influence on the Swine; whereas that, which went out of the One and enter'd into the Other, must have had a Distinct Being and Existence of its Own. This therefore is the true Gospel Notion of *Demoniacks*, they were not *Mad-men* only, but they were possess'd by *Unclean Spirits*; and if *Jesus* be prov'd to have come from God, he could not have been unacquainted with the immaterial World, and therefore no one can reasonably refuse to believe the Account, which he has given us, of the Operations of Evil Spirits upon Human Bodies. Had no Authors, but the Sacred ones, made mention of the *Demoniacks* of those Days, yet the Scripture-Testimony would have been sufficient. But there are unquestionable Authors which agree in this Story, and speak of Possess'd Persons as no uncommon Sight in their Days: *Josephus* (m) says that *Solomon* had from God the Art of casting Devils out of Men and healing them; and that he compos'd Charms for asswaging the Disease, and left behind him Forms of Adjuration, by which the Devils were so effectually cast out as never to return again; and he adds, that this way of healing was practis'd among his Countrymen even down to his own Days. Whether the *Jews* had so effectual a

(l) The Case of Persons possessed with Devils or unclean Spirits is plainly distinguished in the *New Testament* from that of such as were Sick and Diseased in St. Matt. x. 1. St. Mark i. 34. and xvi. 17, 18. St. Luke iv. 40, 41. and vii. 21. And it is distinguished particularly from that of such as were Lunaticks and Paralyticks in St. Matt. iv. 24.

(m) Antiq. Jud. L. 8. c. 2. Παρέχε αὐτοῖς μαθεῖν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ τὴν κατὰ τῶν Δαιμόνων τέχνην εἰς ὠφέλειαν καὶ θεραπεῖαν πῶς ἀνθρώποις. ἐπὶ δ' αὖτε σωτηρίας αἰς παρηγορεῖται τὰ νοσήματα, καὶ τρέψας ἱεροκώσεων κατέλιπεν, οἷς ἐνδύμεθα τὰ δαιμόνια ὡς μηκέτ' ἐπανελθεῖν ἐκδιώκεσι καὶ αὐτὴ μέχει νῦν παρ' ἡμῖν θεραπεῖα πλεῖστον ἰσχύει.

method of dispossessing Men as *Josephus* thought, yet thus much appears plainly from his Testimony, that there were Persons possess'd with Devils in his Days, and long before; nay he tells us in the same place, that he saw one *dispossess'd* in the presence of the Emperor *Vespasian* and his Family: and to prevent our mistaking this Calamity for Madness, or any other Common and Natural Distemper, he explains what he means by being possess'd with Devils, when he (n) says, that *what were call'd Devils or Dæmons were the Spirits of Wicked Men, which enter'd into living Persons, and occasion'd the Death of such of them as met with no Help.* *Plutarch* and *Lucian* mention *Demoniacks* as well known in their Days, and *Philostratus* in his Life of *Apollonius*, among the Miraculous Cures which he ascribes to him, has a particular account of a Young Man who had an Unclean Spirit, (o) *which made him wander from home, and led him into the Desolate parts of the Country, amidst deep Valleys and Precipices.* Where the Reader may observe, that the same Circumstances are said to have attended this Young Man, as the *Mad-men* in the Gospels: And whatever was the Truth of the Fact reported by *Philostratus*, yet it shews both his Opinion that there were *Demoniacks* at that time, and that the Effects of such Possession were commonly the same as the Evangelists represent them. I don't pretend to be able to assign the Reason why God permitted such Instances to be so Frequent in those Ages; but our Ignorance of the Reason is no Argument against the Fact, which we see is confirm'd, not by Christian Writers only, but by the additional Testimonies of Jewish and Heathenish Authors: Except we knew all the Ends and Designs of Providence, we can never set ourselves up for Judges whether the Means it makes use of are Wise or not: how often do we find ourselves mistaking the Wisdom of even our Neighbour's Actions, for want of knowing what he has in view, and what the Circumstances of his Affairs consider'd all together require? And shall We object against things, which we read in the Sacred Writings, as Absurd and Unreasonable, when we Certainly are less able to fathom the Vast and Comprehensive Designs of Providence, than we are to pry into our Neighbour's Little, Narrow ones? A thousand things may be True, which we can give no Account of, because we are but Men; if therefore any one should ask me, why the Devils, which *Jesus* sent out of these *Mad-men*, desir'd leave to enter into Cattle to their Destruction, I should perhaps answer, that *Jesus*, who best knew the Nature of such Evil Spirits, has all along represented them

(n) Τα ὃ καλέμενα Δαιμόνια (ταῦτα δὲ πονηρῶν ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπων πνύματα) τοῖς ᾧσιν εἰσδύομενα καὶ κλείνοῦσι τὰς βοηθείας μὴ τυγχάνουσι. De Bell. Jud. L. 7. c. 6.

(o) Οὐ συγχωρᾷ αὐτὸν οἶκοι εἶναι — εἰς τὰ ἔρημα τῶν χωρίων ἐκτρέπει — ἀπειλεῖ κρημνὸς καὶ βάραθρον.

to us as delighting in Mischief; and therefore it seems natural enough, that Beings of such a Disposition not expecting that *Jesus* would permit them to enter into Human Bodies for the very same reason that he was then forcing them out, should desire to mischief Man as much as they could in what is always very dear to him, I mean his Property: And if it should be asked again, why they desir'd to enter into a Herd of Swine rather than into any other Herd, I might answer that possibly no other Herd was there, or they might reasonably have thought that *Jesus* was not so likely to interpose in This Case as in any other, because the Owners of the *Swine* were justly Punishable with their Destruction. These Answers I might perhaps give to such Enquirers; but I should think that these Answers (like their Questions) were more Curious than Necessary, and should not think myself bound to prove more than that they are Probable: for to all Reasonable Men it is sufficient to shew (as I have done already) that *Jesus* having wrought the greatest of Miracles in raising himself from the Dead, there can be no foundation for doubting of the Truth of this Miracle wrought on the *Mad-men*, even tho' there were less of Light to be drawn from Reason and History for clearing up the several Circumstances of it.

TO conclude; having examin'd carefully all the Objections which Mr. *W.* has rais'd against these two Actions of our Saviour, I may venture to say, that the Reader must by this time be satisfy'd of the Weakness and Unfairness of that Author's attempts. I shall endeavour to shew more of them in two other Discourses of this nature: In the mean while I hope, that it will ever be remembred against such Unbelievers, that Things may seem Difficult to them, only because they are Ignorant; and that there is a Wide Difference between a Passage's not being to be Understood, and Their not Understanding it.

The End of the Second Part.





PART the THIRD.

CONTAINING

*A Defence of the Literal Story of JESUS's causing
the BARRENFIG-TREE to Wither away,*

A N D

His Turning the WATER into WINE.



IT is a True and a well-known Observation of the Lord Bacon, that *a little Philosophy inclines Mens Minds to Atheism, but that Depth in Philosophy brings them about to Religion again*: and it may as justly be said, that a slender Acquaintance with the Scripture furnishes Men with Doubts and Objections, from which a thorough Knowledge of it would soon ease them. A greater Instance of this can scarcely be given than in the six *Discourses* not long since published upon our Saviour's Miracles, in which every Intelligent Reader must be at a loss, whether he should most admire the Boldness or the Ignorance of the Author; for thro' the Whole there appears such an Unacquaintedness with the Jewish History, Customs and Forms of speaking, as shews that there are Arts which Mr. W. is not enough Master of; and such a want of Sincerity in his Quotations and Applications of them, as shews that there is an Art which he is too much Master of.

IN opposition to what he has so boldly advanced in those *Discourses*, my first Part began (where every Rational Apology for the Truth of the Christian Revelation should begin) with shewing by Direct Proof, that Jesus did truly Raise himself from the Dead, as he had foretold; that the profess'd Witnesses of his Resurrection could not possibly be Deceiv'd in this Matter, the Evidence which they had for it being such as excluded all Mistake, upon any Supposition whatever; and that there is as strong Proof of their not intending to Deceive us by a False Testimony, as any Fact is capable of receiving, nay more than any other Fact in the World ever did receive.

AND this sure Foundation being laid, the Consequence, which was then drawn from it, seems clear and undeniable, viz. that

that if *Jesus* wrought this One Miracle, which must be allowed to have been the greatest that could be wrought, it is Unreasonable, it is Perverse, not to allow the Reality of the Other Miracles which the Evangelists ascribe to him: And therefore all Objections raised against the Literal Story of them, (if they could be answered no other way), yet might receive a satisfactory Answer by saying, that the Miracle being a True one, it is highly Improbable that any of the Circumstances, with which the Story of it is told, were otherwise. Things may seem strange and difficult to Us at such a distance of time, and this is easily accounted for; but there is no account to be given, why the Evangelists should, in relating a Real Miracle, add such false Circumstances to it, as would help to destroy its Credit. So that the Question comes to this, whether an Apostle or Mr. *W.* is to be Believed; an Apostle who was Eye-witness to the Fact, or Mr. *W.* who was no Eye-witness, and whom in several other Instances I have proved to be a False Witness.

WITH this Evidence then in hand I enter'd (in my second Part) upon a particular Examination of the two first Miracles of *Jesus*, which Mr. *W.* had objected to, and I endeavoured to clear the Literal Story of them from all the Difficulties which he had loaded them with: and in the course of this Enquiry I now and then set before him some Instances of the Disingenuity of his Quotations from the Fathers and others, that he might at least see that he was discover'd, and never expect that his bare Word should pass for Current in any Argument hereafter.

MY present Design is to do the same by two more of the Miracles, which he has endeavoured to expose; but as I am not bound to follow the Order in which he has plac'd the Miracles, (a Thing of no weight either to his Cause or Mine), I have singled out those which he professes to have treated the most *Ludicrously*, and which I thought to want the most help towards vindicating the Literal account of them. I shall therefore without further Preface enter upon

III. THE Story of (*p*) *Jesus's cursing the Fig-tree*, not despairing to convince even Him, that it was neither an *Aburd*, *Foolish and Ridiculous*, nor a *Malicious and Ill-natur'd Act*, as he has been pleas'd in his mannerly way to call it, in *Disc. iii. p. 4.*

THE Reader may not be at leisure enough to approve of a Solemn Answer to every Trifle; and therefore I shall confine myself to such Objections made by Mr. *W.* against the Literal account of this Miracle, as are of most Weight, and may seem to deserve some Consideration; and they are these Three.

HOW could *Jesus* expect to find Fruit upon this Fig-tree, when the time of Figs was not yet? p. 6.

(*p*) See St. *Matt.* xxi. 19, &c. and St. *Mark* xi. 13, &c.

WHAT Legal Right had he to the Fruit, if he had found any on the Tree? p. 8. and

WHAT Right had he to smite the Tree with a Curse, when it was none of his Property? p. 8.

i §. THE first of these Questions has indeed something Material in it, because as St. *Mark* xi. 13. reports this Fact in our Translation, there is more room for Cavil than in any other Instance which Mr. *W.* has singled out to quarrel with: St. *Mark's* words are these, *And seeing a Fig-tree afar off having Leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but Leaves, for the time of Figs was not yet.*

AT first sight any Candid Reader would imagine, that the Passage was some how misunderstood, and that the Evangelist, who writes so good sense in the other parts of his Gospel, would not have write downright Nonsense in This.

AND therefore I shall endeavour to clear up this Matter; for the doing of which I shall shew two things, viz. that at the time when *Jesus* went up to the *Fig-tree*, it was a Season to expect to find ripe Figs in *Judæa*; and secondly, that the words of St. *Mark* may be understood so as to be consistent with this Circumstance.

WHOEVER reads the Gospels carefully may be convinc'd that the Day, on which *Jesus* wrought this Miracle on the *Fig-tree*, was about the eleventh of the first *Jewish* Month called *Nisan*, or *Tuesday* before the *Passover*: Mr. *W.* indeed says, that (q) *there are no grounds from the Text to think so*; but there are grounds from that Text compar'd with others, and the Proof of it is so plain that none but one, whose Understanding is perplex'd or his Will depraved, could well miss it: For it is well known, that the *Jews* kept the *Passover* on the fourteenth day of their First Month, *Nisan*; which (being a Lunar Month, as all their Months were, and therefore beginning with the first appearance of the New Moon) began sometimes Earlier, and sometimes Later in the Year; if the Year be consider'd purely as Solar, as it is among Us: And to this shifting of *Nisan* in the Solar Year We have endeavour'd to adapt the keeping of our *Easter*, in Commemoration of our Saviour's Resurrection, upon the *Sunday* next after the fifteenth of the *Jewish* Month *Nisan*; and therefore with Us *Easter* falls sometimes as Early as the 22d of *March*, and sometimes as Late as the 25th of *April*.

THE Point then to be enquir'd into is this; Whether about three days before the *Passover*, or about the eleventh day of *Nisan*, there used to be any Figs in *Judæa* so Ripe, as to be fit for gathering and eating.

THAT Some Fruits of the Earth were then Ripe, we may be Sure: For (r) *Josephus* says, that at the time of the *Passover*

(q) Pag. 29.

(r) De Bello Jud. lib. 4. c. 7. ἡ δὲ καρπὸν τῶν ἀκμαίων ἀρπάζαντες, &c.

some *Jewish* Robbers made an Excursion from the Castle of *Massada*, and carried off all the *Ripe Fruits* belonging to the Town of *Engaddi*.

WE find also, that the Month *Nisan* was called *Abib*, or rather was described by its being the Month of *Abib*, i. e. of the growing Ripe of the Fruits of the Earth: And the *Jewish* Harvest always began in their Month *Nisan*; for by comparing *Joshua*, chap. iii. 25. and chap. iv. 19. together, it appears that on the tenth day of their first Month *Nisan*, the *Israelites* passed over *Jordan*, and it then (s) overflowed its banks, which (as is there said) is used to do all the time of the Harvest.

AGREEABLY to which, mention is made in *Levit.* chap. ii. and chap. xxiii. of the *First-Fruits*, which were to be offer'd up to God on the morrow of the Sabbath, which followed the *Passover*. A Sheaf of the *First-Fruits* was to be waved before the Lord; and, to make a Meat-offering of those *First-Fruits*, the Green (*Abib* Ripe) ears of Corn, (i. e. of Barley, which was the soonest Ripe) were to be dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears.

THE Case was, that the Barley and many other Fruits were always Ripe in *Judæa* at the time of the *Passover*; if the *Jews* found (before the Month of *Nisan* began), that there was no likelihood of their being Ripe about the time of the *Passover*, or fourteenth of *Nisan*, they were wont to intercalate a Month, calling it *Ve-adar* or *Adar over again*, and placing it between the last Month *Adar*, and the first Month *Nisan*. By the help of this it always happen'd, that their Barley and earliest Fruits were Ripe at the time of the *Passover*: (t) On the second day after it began, the solemn offering of the *First-Fruits* (before mention'd) was made in the Temple; till this was done, (u) no *Jew* was allow'd to reap his Barley, or gather his Fruits into his Store-house; and as soon as this was done, the Harvest and Ingathering began in *Judæa*; which continued for fifty days without any or with very little Intermission, the Wheat-Harvest following immediately after the Barley-Harvest, as appears from *Ruth* ii. 23. and from *2 Sam.* xxi. 9. And at the end of those days, viz. on the day of *Pentecost*, called the *Feast of the Har-*

(s) This overflowing of *Jordan* was probably occasioned by the latter rain (as the Scriptures call it), which always fell in *Judæa* a little before the time of the Harvest, and therefore came very seasonably to plump their Grain and Fruits, before they were reap'd or gather'd.

(t) These Circumstances are Confirm'd by *Josephus* in *Antiq. Jud.* lib. 3. c. 10. τῇ δ' ἑτέρα τ' Ἀζύμων ἡμέρα, ἐκείνῃ δ' ἐστὶν αὐτῇ καὶ δεκάτῃ, τ' καρπῶν. ὅς ἐδέεισαν, (ὃ καὶ ἡσανίω πρότερον αὐτῶν) μεταλαμβάνουσιν καὶ τ' Θεὸν ἡγούμενοι τιμὰν δίκανον ἐν πρώτῳ, παρ' ὃ τ' ἀποείας τέτων ἔτυχον, τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν τ' κελύβης ἐπιτέρυσσι τρίτον τῶτον &c.

(u) *Levit.* xxiii. 14.

vest,

vest, Exod. xxii. 16. the *Jews* offer'd up two Cakes made of New Wheat, which were the *First-Fruits of the Bread* spoken of in Levit. xxiii. 17. and (x) with this Offering their Harvest was closed.

THE design of mentioning these things is, to shew when the Harvest began in *Judæa*; the Use of which Observation will appear in what follows.

WE come now to enquire, whether it is likely, that *Figs* were Ripe (as some other Fruits were) about the time of the *Passover*, when our Saviour is said to have sought for them: And indeed there seems to be little Difficulty in the Case, if we only Suppose, that in *Judæa* they cultivated that Sort of Fig-trees, which the *Greeks* distinguish'd by the name of *βίφοει*, and the *Latins* of *biferæ*, upon account of their regularly producing two Crops of Figs in the Year: Of these (y) *Pliny* mentions two Sorts, the White and the Black, and describes them as having one Crop Ripe at the time of Harvest, and the other at the time of Vintage: The Figs, which are most common with Us, both the White, and what our Gardiners call the Blue (the same with *Pliny's* Black), are of that Sort, tho' the second Crop comes but seldom to perfection in *England*. If then the Fig-trees in *Judæa* were of this double-bearing sort; and if they kept pace with the Harvest and Vintage, as *Pliny* describes them to do, the first Crop would generally be Ripe at or about the time of the *Passover*, i. e. at the time of the *Jewish* Harvest, and some few forward Figs of that Crop a little Earlier; and then some of the second Crop might well have accompanied the *Grapes*, which the Spies brought out of *Canaan*, upon their Return from searching the Land.

BESIDES (z) *Josephus* tells us, that at the End of the Winter *Herod* besieged *Jerusalem*, and that, after a Siege of five Months, it was taken in the third Month, i. e. the Month *Sivan*, which answers to the last half of our *May*, and the first of our *June*, (or at latest) to the last half of our *June* and the first of our *July*: Count then back from thence, and you will find that the Winter ended, and the Spring began in *Judæa* about the middle of our *January*, or (at the latest) about the (a) middle of our

(x) See *Fuller's Miscel. Sacr. lib. 3. c. 11.*

(y) *Nat. Hist. lib. 15. c. 18. Sunt præterea eadem serotina & præcoces, biferæ, alba ac nigra, cum messe vindemiæque maturescentes.* On which *F. Hardouin's* Note is This; *Sunt præterea (inquit) biferæ, alba nigraque, quæ & serotinum eadem cum vindemiâ, & præcocem pariter cum messe ferant.*

(z) Compare what he says *De Bello Jud. lib. 1. cap. 17, 18. with what he says in Antiq. Jud. Lib. 14. c. 16. Edit. Hudson.*

(a) Rather about the middle of *January*, than that of *February*; for in *Italy*, which lies not so much to the Southward as *Judæa*, the Spring according to *Ovid* began on *February 9.*

*Quintus ab æquoreis nitidum jubar extulit. undis
Lucifer, & primi tempora Veris erunt.*

Fast. ii. 149.

February.

February. Now *Solomon* in *Cantic.* ii. 13. among other marks of the Winter's being ended, and consequently of the Spring's being begun in *Judæa*, describes This to be one: *The Fig-tree putteth forth her green Figs*; or rather, *The Fig-tree hath given a Sweetness, or Ripeness, to the Unripe Fig*; for the (b) Original words are thus to be translated: If therefore in the middle of our *January*, or (if you will) *February*, the Figs were so forward in *Judæa*, as Then to have a Sweetness and to be Ripening, is it Unreasonable to conclude; that in so Warm and Fruitful a Climate, as that Country was, there might be Ripe Figs, and fit for Eating, in the latter end of our *March*, or before the latter end of our *April*; which was the time, when our Saviour sought for them on this Fig-tree?

TO what has been said may be added, that *Josephus* describing the Fruitfulness of the Country of *Gennesareth*, which was a part of *Judæa*, says that it (c) *afforded Figs and Grapes ten*

(b) *Paggiab*, render'd *Green Figs*, is a word no where found in the Old Testament except in this place: but it is a common word among the *Arabians*, and signifies *crudum, immaturum*, as a learned Friend informs me; who finds *Aben-Ezra* too explaining it by *Fruit before it is Ripe or Mellow*.

Kanat, render'd *putteth forth*, signifies *condidit aromatibus* in *Gen.* i. 2, 3, and 26. the only places where it is used: from thence by a Metaphor it is apply'd to Fruits, and signifies (as the above-mention'd Gentleman assures me) in the *Arabick* Tongue, *rubuit, maturuit*: So that the Sense of the Passage will be this; *The Fig-tree hath begun to make her Figs Ripe, which were before Unripe, or Sweet which were before Sour.* L. *Capellus's* Note upon the Place agrees with this; *proprie* (says he) *MATURAT seu DULCORAT, dulces facit; nam kanat est aromatibus condire; unde, ad fructus translatus, est acerbum & austerum eorum saporem veluti condire, hoc est, maturando dulciorem reddere.*

(c) *De Bello Jud.* lib. 3. 9. *σαφυλὴν τε καὶ σύκον δέκα μηνσὶν ἀδιαλείπτως χορηγεῖ, τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς καρπὺς δι' ἔτος* (al. *διὰ θέρους*) *ὅλα περιγυρασκονίας αὐλοῖς* (al. *ἐαυλοῖς*): Where *Josephus* must mean that the *Grapes* and *Figs* were growing during those ten Months; not meerly, that dried *Grapes* and *Figs* might be preserved there so long; for in less Favourable Climates they will last all the Year round: *Julian* in his *Epist.* to *Serapion* carries this matter farther, and says of Fig-trees in general, that they, and they only, bear Figs all the Year round, the Young ones beginning to grow as soon as the Old ones were gather'd; and then adds, *ὥς, φησὶν καὶ Ὅμηρος ἐν Ἀλκινόου κήπῳ, τὰς καρπὺς ἀλλήλοις ἐπιγυράσκειν*: alluding to *Homer's* *Odyss.* lib. 7.

Ὅσχην ἐπ' ὅσχην γυράσκει, μῆλον δ' ἐπὶ μῆλῳ,
Ἀυτὰρ ἐπὶ σαφυλῇ σαφυλῇ, σύκον δ' ἐπὶ σύκῳ.

From whence I suspect. that *Josephus*, in this Passage before us, wrote *ἐπιγυρασκονίας αὐλοῖς*, and borrow'd his Expression, as *Julian* did, from what *Homer* had said concerning *Alcinous's* Garden.

Months

Months in the Year without Intermission; and tho' some allowance is to be made for the Extraordinary Growth in that Territory, yet the other Parts of *Judæa* must be supposed to have afforded these Fruits for several Months in the Year, especially That where the Fig-tree grew; it being between *Jerusalem* and *Bethany*, i. e. in the Lot of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, which (as the same (d) Author tells us) was second to no part of *Canaan* in Fruitfulness.

UPON such Authorities as these, we know what to make of the *First-ripe Figs* so often mention'd by the Prophets of the Old Testament. For God says in *Hos. ix. 10. I saw your Fathers as the first-ripe in the Fig-tree, at her time*: and these Early Figs seem to have been much esteem'd among the *Jews*, for *Jerem. xxiv. 2.* speaks of a *Basket, that had very good Figs, even like the Figs that are first-ripe*: and (to mention no other Passages) the Greediness, with which the *Jews* used to gather this Pleasant Fruit, is thus emphatically described by *Isa. xxviii. 4. As the hasty Fruit (i. e. (e) the first-ripe Fig) before the Summer; which, when he that looketh upon it, seeth it, while it is yet (f) on its bough, he eateth it up; i. e. he, that spieth it out, is ready to devour it, before he can gather it; so very fond are men of this sort of Figs*: And that we may not mistake the Season, when these coveted Figs were pluck'd for Eating, *Isaiah* here tells us, that it was *before the Summer*, which must have begun in *Judæa* (at least) as early as the *Passover*, because the Harvest began then.

FROM all which it may (I think) be fairly concluded, that the Figs in *Judæa* were commonly so Ripe, as to be fit for Eating at the time when our Saviour went up to this Fig-tree; and that this first Crop of Figs was of so good a kind, or was so Welcome, because it was the Earliest, that Travellers among the *Jews* were desirous of gathering them, when they met with them; and lastly, that *Jesus* seeing this Fig-tree to have Leaves upon it, (which in Fig-trees always come later than the Fruit) had good reason to go up to it (as it is said he did), *expecting to find Fruit thereon*.

(d) Antiq. Jud. Lib. 5. c. 1.

(e) LXX. ὡς πρὶ δέσμευθ' οὖκ ἐστιν.

(f) The Original word *becappo* signifies *on its bough*, and should be so render'd here, not as in our Bible *in his hand*: for the LXX had plainly that first sense in view, when they render'd the place thus, πρὶν εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτόν, *before he takes it into his hand, i. e. while it is yet on its bough*. R. Kimchi upon the place says, *My honoured Father, whose Memory be blessed, expounds becappo by on its bough, (agreeably to that of Job xv. 32, and his branch kippatho shall not be green): As much as to say, As soon as ever he sees it on the bough, he devours it, out of the great fondness which he has for it. And so the Plural kappoth signifies branches or boughs in Levit. xxiii. 40.*

WHAT remains then to be proved is This; that the Words of St. Mark, *ὃς δὲ ἦν κατεῖδες συκῶν*, may be so interpreted as to be consistent with what has been already shewn.

AND Mr. W. himself has furnish'd us with (g) an Interpretation of the words which will serve the purpose; for he has fallen in with some of the Modern Commentators, and has recommended the reading of St. Mark's words by way of Interrogation, *for was it not the time of Figs?* Admitting this small change, and putting a part of the Sentence into a Parenthesis, the whole Verse will run thus; *And seeing a Fig-tree afar off having Leaves, he came if haply he might find any thing thereon (and when he came to it, he found nothing but Leaves); for was it not the time of Figs?* By the help of the Parenthesis the last words are a good reason for what went immediately before the Parenthesis, i. e. for Jesus's expecting to find Fruit upon the Tree: And this way of writing might be shewn to be very common in all Authors, especially the Sacred ones.

UPON this Interpretation of the words Mr. W. says that all the Difficulty vanishes; but this he says, after he had made the most of this Difficulty, and expos'd St. Mark's account with all the Raillery and Ill-will that he could shew, for (h) a page or two together. Where then is the Candor, where the Honesty of such a Behaviour? What? ridicule the Evangelist as guilty of an Absurdity, and yet have a Solution of that Absurdity ready at hand? A plain Mark that it is not Truth which this Author aims at! but this is only one Mark out of many.

AND yet I can help Mr. W. to another Solution of this Difficulty, where there is no Change of the Point, and which I prefer to His, as more Natural, and answering the purpose with the same effect: Suppose then, that by the words, *for the time of Figs was not yet*, may be meant, that the time of gathering Figs was not yet come; and thus, keeping the Parenthesis, as before plac'd in the middle of the Sentence, we may understand the words as a reason given why *Jesus came if haply he might find any thing on the Fig-tree*. The Fig-harvest (if I may so call the Gathering-time) was not yet arrived: On the second day of Unleaven'd Bread, which was about five or six days after This, the First-Fruits of all, that was then Ripe, were solemnly offer'd in the Temple, and till Then the Owners of the Fig-trees were not allow'd to gather in their Fruit; so that till Then they were oblig'd to let their Figs (tho' Ripe) hang on the Trees, and consequently five or six days before That Day (i. e. when Jesus went up to this Tree) any Traveller might expect to find Fruit upon the Fig-trees which he met with in his Journey.

THAT by the *time of Figs*, may be here meant the time of gathering them, is no new Opinion of mine; It has been main-

(g) p. 28.

(h) p. 7, 8.

tained by (i) Dr. Lucas and (k) Bishop Lloyd; and I find Dr. Whitby mentioning it as the Ingenious Exposition of a Reverend and Learned Bishop, whom he does not name, but who (I think) is Bishop Kidder; and tho' he does not agree with him, yet he declares that he should acquiesce in this Interpretation, if he could find it prov'd that any Figs were fit to be gathered at the Passover. This (I think) I have prov'd with such a degree of Evidence as Dr. Whitby would have admitted. And that the time of Figs may signify the time of gathering them, there is good Authority from the Writings of the sacred Penmen. This seems to be the Sense of the word *καιρος*, time or season, in *Psal. i. 4.* (according to the LXX.) (l) which shall give its Fruit in its Season, i. e. at the time of gathering it: And this (I think) is the Sense of the word in *St. Mark xii. 2.* but particularly in *St. Matt. xxi. 34.* who says, that when the Lord of the Vineyard in the Parable sent his Servants to the Husbandmen, that they might receive the Fruits of it, it was when the time of the Fruit drew near, *ὅτε ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ καρπῶν*, i. e. when the time of gathering them was at hand; for, it being most natural to suppose, that the Servants were not sent more early than was needful, the time of ripe Grapes was probably then actually come, and only the time of gathering them drew near.

BUT let Mr. W. choose which Solution he will, (his Own, if he pleases), he must acknowledge, that there is a sufficient answer given to the suppos'd Unreasonableness of Jesus's expecting to find Fruit out of Season.

HAVING dwelt pretty long on this head, because it contain'd the most material part of his Discourse, I shall now proceed briefly to the second Objection.

2 §. WHAT Legal Right had Jesus to the Fruit, if he had found any on the Tree?

TO which I answer, that he had a Right, and a Legal one too, tho' he was neither Landlord nor Tenant, (as Mr. W. expresses it) nor had any House or Land of his own by Law. And what I say, will be proved thus. There is a Law given by God to the Jews in *Deut. xxiii. 24, 25.* to this purpose, *When thou comest into thy Neighbour's Vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes to thy fill, at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy Vessel: And when thou comest into the standing Corn of thy Neighbours, then thou mayest pluck the Ears with thine hand, but thou shalt not move a Sickle unto thy Neighbour's standing Corn.*

(i) See his Sermons, Vol. 3. Serm. 1. p. 10.

(k) See his *History of the last Passover of Christ* (printed, but never published) in St. Martin's Library.

(l) *Ὁ ἄ καρπὸν αὐτῆ δώσει ἐν καιρῷ αὐτῆ.* And thus the time of Corn is the time of reaping it, as in *Job v. 26.* LXX. *ὡς περ σίτος ὥριμος κατὰ καιρὸν θερίζομεν.*

BISHOP *Patrick* in his Commentary on this place says, that the *Jewish* Doctors extended this Law (and indeed the Reason of the Law extended it) not only to *Grapes* and *Corn*, the two mention'd Particulars; but to *Olives*, *Figs*, *Dates*, and all common eatable Fruits: And (*m*) *Josephus* confirms this by applying the Law to *ripe Fruits of this kind in general*, and adding that the benefit of this Indulgence reached not only to *Jews*, but to all Travellers (whether Natives or not) on the high-way in *Judæa*; who had a Right by virtue of this Law, to eat of any ripe Fruits that they met with, as freely as if they were their own Property. This then being a Part of the Common Law of the Country, and no man having such a Property in his Fruit-trees, as to exclude Travellers and Passengers from this Benefit, *Jesus* would have done no Injury to the Owner of this Fig-tree, if he had found Figs upon it, and gathered them; because he would only have done what he had a Right to do, and what all his Countrymen lawfully did on the like occasion. What then must we say of this Author, who insinuates, that *Jesus* would have been a Rob-Orchard, if he had had an Opportunity? Vile insinuation! and no less Weak than Vile, since it is founded on an Ignorance of this Jewish Law, which was so easy to be known!

I come then to the

3 §. And last Objection, which is this, *What Right had Jesus to smite this Tree with a Curse, when it was none of his Property?*

AND to this several sufficient answers have been frequently given; for brevity's sake I shall content myself with giving One at present:

ACCORDING to the Christian Scheme, which supposes *Jesus* to be (what I have prov'd him in my first Part to be) a Prophet sent from God, and acting by the Spirit of God, there is no Difficulty in justifying this his behaviour: For God must be allowed to have a superior Right over all things, and a Property in them of a higher Nature than any that a Human Owner of them has. Not only all the Beasts of the Forest are his (as God himself declares by the Psalmist, l. 10.) but so are the Cattle upon a thousand Hills: and it is in virtue of this Right that God is often found in the Old Testament threatening the Jews by his Prophets, that he would lay their Land waste, and destroy all the Trees with their Fruits for the Punishment of their Sins: And thus we find in our Saviour's days, that the Jews had (*n*) filled up the measure of their Iniquities, and were at this very time, when *Jesus* smote the Fig-tree with a Curse, devoted with their Country to Ruin and Destruction: *The things which belong'd to*

(*m*) *Antiq. Jud. L. 4. c. 8.* Μὴ δὲ ὁ πάρας ἀκμαζέσης καλύειν ἀπὲρ τὰς ὁδῶν βαδίζοντας, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐξ οἰκείων αὐτοῖς ἐπιτρέπειν ἐμπίπλασθαι, καὶ ἐλχάριοι τυγχάνουσι καὶ ξένοι.

(*n*) *Mat. xxiii. 32.*

their peace, were even then hid from their Eyes, as he tells them Luke xix. 42. and he goes on in the following verses to pronounce the Sentence already decreed against Jerusalem.

AND we find farther, that the Execution of this Sentence was put into the hands of *Jesus* under the title (o) of *the son of man*. Where then was the Injustice, if that Judgment, which he was authoriz'd to execute upon the whole Land and all the Produce thereof, he executed (for a wise and good-natur'd Reason, as I will shew by and by) upon one Tree in his Lifetime? Where all things are justly consign'd over to Ruin, no Injury is done, if some part has its Punishment hasten'd and brought upon it before the time is come for the rest: as when several men are sentenc'd to Death for the same Crime, it is no Injustice to call immediately for the Forfeit of one Life among them, and leave the others for some other Convenient season. It is just the same with a Nation consider'd as consisting of Parts; the Ruin of some Cities, Houses, or Trees may justly take place of the rest, where all are given over to Destruction: And therefore *Jesus*, if he had a Right to execute a Curse on the whole Land of *Judæa*, must be allowed a Right to execute a Curse upon so small a Part of it, as this Fig-tree was.

AND less Objection still is to be made against it, if he design'd the Punishment of this Tree for an Emblem to the *Jews* of what their Case then was, and what their Punishment would shortly be: for it was not *Passion* and *Disappointment* in not finding Figs on it, when he was Hungry, that set him to work this Miracle; that is Mr. *W's* ill-natur'd suggestion, for which he has no Authority unless his own Experience of what Lengths of Mischief *Passion* and *Disappointment* may perhaps have carried Him. But this Action of *Jesus* had a higher and a more worthy End and View in it; for St. *Mat.* xxi. 19. relates this proceeding of *Jesus* towards the Fig-tree as well as St. *Mark*, and joins to the account of it two Parables, which he spake about the same time to the *Jews*, and which he concludes with this remarkable application, *Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof*, ver. 43. which is a Key to open our Saviour's meaning in his blasting the Fig-tree as well as in his two Parables: for from thence this Moral may be gather'd, that the Fig-tree is the Jewish Nation, that the *Kingdom of God* or the Gospel was preached to them, but they were Barren; they would not repent, and (as St. *John* the Baptist speaks) *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*. They were therefore taught by this Miracle perform'd on the Barren Fig-tree, that the Gospel would be remov'd from them, and that (for their rejecting it) they would be left to their own *Unfruitful works of Darkness*, and consign'd over to Destruction, to *wither away* as a Nation, and be *dried*

(o) *Mat.* xxiv. 30, 37, 38. *Mark* xiii. 26. *Luke* xxi. 27, 36.

up from the roots. And the Sentence, *Let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever*, has been hitherto verify'd, that unhappy Nation having continued in the same barren state, and lying to this day under the Moral of the Curse pronounced upon that Fig-tree.

IT was very usual among the Easterns to express Things by Actions; variety of Instances to this purpose might be given out of the *Old and New Testament*; and therefore when the Warning, given by this Action to the whole Nation of the *Jews*, was so Charitable and Benevolent an one, it is meer Perverseness to cavil at this Miracle, because it was a Destructive one to the Tree: It was so, but it meant to prevent the Destruction of a Nation; and that, you will allow, was the Reverse of a *Malicious and Ill-natur'd* Act: But strip it of this Moral, and suppose the Fig-tree to have only undergone the Punishment to which the whole Land was doom'd; was it Therefore no Miracle? may not God work a Miracle to Chastise as well as to Bless? Who or What prescribes to him a Law to the Contrary? *Ananias* was stricken Dead, and *Elymas* the Sorcerer was smitten with Blindness; and were there Therefore no Miracles in these two Cases, because there was Destruction? This way of arguing would be to rob God of his power of inflicting Extraordinary Punishments on Sinners. Why then does Mr. *W.* assert, that this Action of *Jesus* is (p) *not to be accounted for, because it was to the Destruction of another man's harmless and inoffensive Tree?* And why are Archbishop *Wake* and Mr. *Chandler* summon'd so rudely before him, to reconcile with this and some other Miracles the general Notion of a Miracle, which the One taught, and the Other (as he says) approved? For to execute a justly deserved Punishment upon some Persons or Things, especially if with a View to promote some great and general good, is an Action consistent with the Perfections of God to interest himself in, such as answers to the Character of God as a Good and Gracious Being, and shews his Love to Mankind and his Inclination to do them good, which with Mr. *Chandler* are some of the Rules of Judging, by whom Miracles are perform'd. The best and most Gracious of Earthly Monarchs do sometimes Punish particular Persons when Criminal, in Love and Goodness to their Subjects; and a contrary Behaviour would have more of Cruelty than Benevolence in it. And this I have shew'd to be the Case in the *Driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*, in the *permitting the Devils to enter into the Herd of Swine to their Destruction*, and in this Miracle (now before us) of *blasting the Fig-tree*: All which I have prov'd to have been done by way of Punishment deservedly inflicted, and in such Cases Punishment is no Injury. This therefore is a full Defence of the Archbishop's and Mr. *Chandler's* Notions of a true Miracle.

I think that there is nothing material on this head, which that Author has started, and which I have left unanswer'd; unless it be his Peculiar reasoning in p. 17, against the Letter of this Miracle, from what *Jesus* says to his Disciples on this occasion, in *Matt. xxi. 21.* *that if they had Faith, they should not only do what was done to the Fig-tree; but if they should say to this Mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the Sea, it should be done:* Because this was never Literally done by the Disciples, that we read of, therefore he concludes that *Jesus* did not Literally curse the Fig-tree. But might not the Disciples have a Power given them to do this among other Miracles, without ever having occasion to shew their Power in this Instance? There might be neither a *Failure in Jesus's Promise*, nor a *Want of Faith* in them for the doing this Miracle, and yet it might never have been perform'd, because no proper Opportunity might have called for this Demonstration of their Power: And with this answer I leave him, which may satisfy Others, tho' He perhaps may not receive it as satisfactory.

IN his Criticisms upon the Greek Text, particularly upon *St. Matthew's* words, which he renders thus, p. 29. (q) *Not as yet, or not until now, against the Age has fruit grown on thee*, he has follow'd no Commentator, and, I can promise him, will never be followed by any.

BUT Ignorance may be excus'd in one, who has so much greater Faults to answer for: Before I close the Subject of this Miracle, I shall give the Reader a Sample or two of his unfair method of quoting the Fathers.

St. Austin (according to him, p. 4.) *very plainly says, that this Fact in Jesus, upon supposition that it was done, was a foolish one:* That Father's Words, as *Mr. W.* himself has quoted them at the bottom of his page, are these, *Hoc Factum, nisi Figuratum, stultum invenitur, i. e. This which Jesus did, was a Foolish Action, unless it had some Figurative meaning.* Is this saying that it was *Foolish, upon supposition that it was done?* Does not *St. Austin* expressly allow it to have been done, when he says *hoc factum?* And does not he directly charge the Folly upon something Else, upon a supposition that it had no other meaning than a Literal one? A Pen and a Spirit like that of *St. Austin* might put this Forgery in such a Light as *Mr. W.* would not care for.

AGAIN p. 16. he brings in *Origen* as saying, *that there are some things spoken of in the Evangelists as Facts, which were never transacted.* But (r) *Origen* speaks of the Historical parts of the

(q) Μηκέτι ἐκ σὺ καρπὸς γέννεται εἰς τὸ αἰῶνα.

(r) *Historia Scripturæ* interdum inserit quædam vel minus gesta, vel quæ omnino geri non possunt; interdum quæ possunt geri, nec tamen gesta sunt. *De Principiis*, L. 4.

Scripture in general, and shews what he means, by the Instances which he gives out of the Old and New Testament, such as *God's walking in the Garden in the cool of the Day*; his being spoken of as having *Hands, and Mouth, and Ears*; and with regard to the Gospel-precepts he Instances in the *plucking out a right eye, and cutting off a right-hand*, as things that *might possibly be done, but never were*: And then he subjoins a request to his Readers *not to think that it was his Opinion, that, because some things were not done according to the Letter of the History, therefore he would destroy the Credit of the Scripture-History.*

IF Mr. *W.* then had read the one Passage, he should have read the other, and not have brought in *Origen* as giving a Testimony which he expressly disclaims.

IN p. 9. he quotes *St. John of Jerusalem* as saying, *Arbor non est justè siccata, the Fig-tree was not justly dried up.* But these words are only a piece of the Sentence which runs thus, *Dicat aliquis, Si tempus non erat Ficorum, non peccavit Ficus, quæ fructum non habebat: si autem non peccavit, non est justè siccata, i. e. It may be objected, that if it was not the time of Figs, then the tree was not in fault for having none; and if it was not in fault, then it was not justly dried up.* Where the Reader sees, that what Mr. *W.* quotes as that Father's Sentiment, is only an Objection which he puts into the mouth of some Adversary to Christianity: To which Objection he immediately subjoins an Answer (such as it is), which he thought a sufficient one, but which Mr. *W.* has Unfairly taken no notice of.

THESE three Instances may suffice to shew what Credit should be given to an Author, who advances Falshoods so easy to be detected.

IV. THE fourth Miracle which I shall endeavour to set free from such Objections as Mr. *W.* has rais'd against it, is that of (s) *Jesus's turning Water into Wine at the Marriage Feast in Cana of Galilee, John ii. 1, &c.* The Literal Story of which he has attack'd under the Character of a Jewish Rabbi, with all the Spite to Christianity that the Ancient Jewish Rabbins shew'd to its Founder, and with such ill Manners as no Modern Jews among Us (I am persuaded) would offer to a Church and State so Indulgent to them as Ours is. But, whether the Inveective come from *Jew or Gentile*, from the suppos'd Rabbi or Mr. *W.* himself, it is as much Wanting in Proof, as it is Abounding in Malice.

AN Outcry he has rais'd, and there seems at first Sight to be some Difficulty in the Story, as he has manag'd it; and therefore I will examine to the Bottom all that He has advanc'd in his Own or the Rabbi's name. And in doing it I shall take the same

(s) Mr. *W.*'s Discourse 4. p. 23.
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Course as I have hitherto done, tho' I now find more Difficulty than formerly; for his Objections against this Miracle lie in such Confusion, that this part of his Discourse more particularly requires some Skill and Pains to bring it into any Order.

HOWEVER the Chief Objections are contain'd (or at least will be answer'd) under these three Heads.

HOW came *Jesus* to vouchsafe his Presence at a Wedding? p. 30.

WHY did he supply the Guests with so large a Quantity of Wine, when it is said, that they had *well drunk* already? p. 24, 31.

HOW came he to give such an answer to his Mother, as, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* p. 32.

1 §. TO the first Question, *How came Jesus to vouchsafe his Presence at a Wedding?* I may answer with another Question, Why should he *not* have gone thither, when he was invited? Tradition says, that the Persons, whose Wedding was then celebrating, were *Alpheus* or *Cleopas*, and she who in the Sacred Scripture is called *Mary* the Sister of *Jesus's* Mother: but, without depending upon Tradition, it seems not unlikely from some Circumstances of the Story, that they were either Relations to the Virgin *Mary*, or her Intimate Acquaintance; for we find Her interesting herself, that the Guests might be supply'd when the Wine was wanting, and taking upon her to give the Servants Directions to do whatever her Son should bid them do, ver. 9. Now if *Jesus* and his Disciples were invited to come, and if the New-married Couple were of his Kindred or Acquaintance, what reason can be assign'd, why he ought to have declin'd the Invitation? Is it Certain, that such Indecencies, as Wife and Good men should not be Witnesses to, are practis'd at all Weddings? or might not the Company have been restrained by the Presence of *Jesus* from any thing of Levity and Unbecoming Joy? How does this Author know, how soon *Jesus* retir'd after the Meal was over? or why may not he suspect, that *Jesus* introduc'd such a Religious Discourse, while he was there, as was Suitable to the solemn occasion! If he had read what the best Authors say of the *Jewish* Weddings, he would have found, that such Liberties were not taken in Them as we see too often practis'd among us. But it seems, that (according to Mr. W.) such *Excesses in drinking were there indulged*, as it was not fit for *Jesus* to see and countenance: This is the Material part, and therefore I proceed to

2 §. THE second Objection which this Author has made, viz. *How came Jesus to supply the Guests with so large a quantity of Wine, when it is said, that they had well drunk already?* And to clear up this matter the better, I shall prove these two things, That there is no foundation in the Text to conclude, that there was any Excess of that sort committed there; and that the Quantity

Quantity of Wine, which *Jesus* miraculously provided, was not such as must needs have made him accessory to any Excess amongst the Guests.

F O R proving the first of these, let us consider the force of the words, which are made the ground of the Objection, *Every man at the beginning doth set forth Good Wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is Worse: but thou hast kept the good Wine until now*, ver. 10. But we are to remember who it is that says this, it is *the Governor of the Feast*, speaking to the *Bridegroom*: and the Drift of his Speech is only to shew, that one thing usually observ'd in such Feasts was not observ'd in This; for in Them the Best Wine was us'd to be brought out first, whereas Here it was produc'd *not* at first: the Circumstance of Mens having *well drunk* in other Feasts when the Worse Wine was serv'd up, does not necessarily require any Parallel in this Feast; it may have been only thrown in by the by, as it is a known and allow'd thing for Poets in working up a similitude, to throw in little Circumstances which have no resemblance to the Fact which the similitude is illustrating. What the *Governor of the Feast* said on this occasion, was as True and as Pertinent, if the Company present had not *well drunk*, because his Intention was only to shew, that there was a wide Difference in one particular between what was done at This, and what was commonly done at Other Entertainments: Is it not a piece of Violence then to force every part of the Speech into a Parallel, and to conclude from such a Chance Expression as This, that the Guests at this Wedding Dinner had already drunk to Excess?

B U T allowing (what is so unreasonably contended for), that the Phrase, *when men have well drunk*, ὅταν μεθύσωσι, is a Description of the Condition which the Guests were Then in; yet this Objector will get little by it, because it does not necessarily carry any Ill Sense along with it. The word is often us'd for drinking more than Men usually do, but without any Intemperance. And can any Serious Writer think, that St. *John* meant it otherwise here? Is it to be imagin'd, that the Apostle intended to expose his Master's Behaviour on this occasion? or that he wou'd have us'd the word, if he had not known, that it bore an Innocent Sense as well as Vicious one? μεθύειν in its primitive signification is only *drinking after the Sacrifice*, and nothing in the Derivation of the word determines this to be done to any Excess, or beyond the proper bounds of Joy on a Festival: And if, besides the Etymology of the Word, an Instance be requir'd, in which it is thus us'd for drinking *not* Intemperately, we find one in the LXX version of (t) *Genesis* xliii. 34. where it is said, that *Joseph's Brethren* ἐμεθύονσαν μετ' αὐτῶ; and yet the Cir-

(t) See the same in *Cantic.* v. 1.

cumstances of that Feast, which *Joseph* made for his Brethren, plainly shew, that no Excess or Approach to it is intended by the Expression; for they knew him not then to be any other than the *Governor of Egypt*, nay it is said that *they were afraid of him*, ver. 18. and their whole Behaviour before and at the Feast must convince us, that they were too much on their Guard, and too solicitous about their own Safety, to give way to any Intemperance in his Presence. And the same sense of the like word is to be seen in what God (according to the LXX version) says to the *Jews*, *Hag. i. 6.* where complaining that they neglected to build his Temple, he tells them, that on this account he had not blessed the Fruits of their Land with the Ordinary Increase, *Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink:* the Greek is ἐπύτετε καὶ οὐκ εἰς μέδω. Are we to think, that the LXX Interpreters intended to make God use the word here in the sense, that Mr. *W.* gives it in *St. John*? for could that be a Punishment worthy of God to inflict? or could it be a Blessing, fit to encourage them to expect, that they should drink εἰς μέδω to Excess, as this Author would understand it?

EVERY candid Man then must acknowledge, that it is a meer Cavil, first to suppose the words to be spoken of the Guests at this Feast, when there is no Appearance that it was a Description of Them; and then to give the words a Vicious sense, which they do not necessarily bear, and which there is all the Reason imaginable to believe, that they were not in this Place intended to bear.

THE next thing which I was to prove was this; that the Quantity of Wine, which *Jesus* produc'd on this occasion, was not such, as must needs have made him accessory to any Excess among the Guests.

A Rabbi, or a *W.* might have known that the *Jewish* (u) Marriages were celebrated with Feastings, not only on the day of the Solemnity (as with us), but for six or seven days after: and that at these Feasts not only all their Relations, Neighbours and Acquaintance were invited, but it was well taken, if any others (tho' not invited) would come to partake of the Entertainment, and bear a share in the Joy of the Occasion: A Custom which to this day prevails among Us too, in some of the most remote parts of our Country. And as to this Marriage, though the Evangelist's words are rendered (x) *The third day there was a Marriage*, &c. yet they may be as well translated thus, (y) *On the third day a Marriage-Feast was celebrated*, &c.

(u) See *Calmet's Dissertation, Sur les Mariages des Hebreux.*

(x) Τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ γάμος ἐγένετο, &c.

(y) So the *Syriac* renders it in this place; and *Grotius* proves, that γάμος has this Signification in several places of the Sacred Scripture. See his Note on *Matt. xxii. 2.*

Some think (and not without appearance of Reason), that by *the third day* is meant the Third day of the Marriage-Feast; and whether that Interpretation be allow'd or not, yet since it is so well known, that the *Jews* feasted seven days on such occasions, and since it is not said on what Day this Miracle was wrought, we are at Liberty to suppose, that it might as well have been on the Third day after the Marriage as on any other.

T H A T there were great Numbers present at it, may be gather'd from there being a *Governor of the Feast* appointed for this occasion; and it is probable, that many more than were expected came there on that day, perhaps to see *Jesus* and his Disciples, of whom they had heard much Talk; on this account, or because on the proceeding days the Bride and Bridegroom had entertained more Guests than they had look'd and provided for, the Wine might fall short, which they had laid up for the whole seven days Feasting: Allowing then that the Quantity of Wine, which *Jesus* made at this Feast, was as Large as our Translation represents it, yet why should not Mr. *W.* suppose (what is very Probable), that the Wine thus Miraculously produc'd was design'd not only to supply the want of that day, but of the succeeding ones, till the *whole time* of Feasting was ended? Ill-nature always makes the Worst of every thing; but an unprejudic'd Man may (upon this reasonable Supposition) believe, that there might be no Excess countenanc'd or practis'd, tho' the Supply of Wine was so Plentiful.

B U T what if our Translation should not be so Accurate here as in other Places? What if the *six Waterpots* did not hold so much as *two or three Firkins apiece*? Mr. *W.* himself says, p. 26. that if *he had been the Translator, they should not have held above two or three pints apiece, which measure is as agreeable to the Original as Firkin.* If so, why is the Miracle to be flouted at? and why should not he content himself to raise an Outcry against the Translation? He might have known, that the Learned of all Communions have of late looked more nicely into the meaning of the *μετρῆτις* or *measure* here spoken of, and have represented it as containing much less than a *Firkin*: The LXX Translators in 2 *Chron.* iv. 5. use the word *μετρῆτις* for the *Bath* of the *Jews*, and *Calmet* in his *Dissertation on the Antiquity of Money*, makes the *Bath* to contain less than 30 *French Pints*, i. e. less than six Gallons of our *English Measure*: *Lami* sets it still lower, and makes it hold very little more than twenty *French Pints*, which brings the measure down to less than four Gallons: *Le Clerc*, with others mentioned by *Calmet*, says that the *μετρῆτις* held about twenty-five *French pounds* of Water, which falls short of three Gallons of our measure: And the Learned Bishop *Cumberland*, (whose Accuracy in this part

of Knowledge is allow'd by all) proves, that most probably the *μετρησις* of Syria is meant here, and That he computes to have held less than one *English* Gallon; and according to this Reckoning the whole six *Waterpots* might not have contained more than about fourteen or fifteen Gallons of *English* Measure; a Quantity not very Large, if we allow (as we must), that there were great Numbers present at the Feast; or that, what was not then drank, might be a seasonable Supply for what wou'd be wanting at the Feast on the ensuing days.

WHEN the Learned, tho' differing in their Opinions, do yet all agree to fix the Quantity lower than a *Firkin*, and some of them so very much below it, as we have seen; is it Fair and Ingenuous in Mr. *W.* to take occasion from an Error of the Translation to set the whole Letter of the Miracle at Defiance? since he himself knew (as he says), how to rectify the Translation by making *Pints* of the *Firkins*: especially since, if the Quantity were allowed to be as large as the Translation makes it, he knows, that to provide Plenty is not to encourage Excess; what was more than suffic'd might have been laid up for other opportunities: And he may as well charge God with promoting Drunkenness, whenever he blessed the Vineyards of the *Jews* with any Extraordinary Increase.

UPON the whole then it appears, that what Mr. *W.* says, p. 24. viz. That, when *Jesus* turn'd the Water into Wine, the Company were already drunk, and what his *Rabbi* says in his Vulgar strain, p. 31. that they were more than half seas over, are Fictions of their Own; and since it may be fairly presum'd, and is by Mr. *W.* own'd, that the Quantity of Wine, then Created, was not so Large as our Translation represents it; and since (if it was so Large) it is probable, that it was intended for a seasonable Supply upon the remainder of the seven days Feasting, I conclude, that no Attempt of Mr. *W.* can make this Circumstance any good Argument against the Letter of this Miracle.

3 §. THERE remains now only one more Objection to it, which is what *Jesus* reply'd to his Mother, when she said, *They have no Wine*; to which he answered, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* ver. 4. From which Mr. *W.*'s captious *Rabbi* very boldly concludes, that *Jesus* himself was a little in for it, or he had never spoke so waspishly and snappishly to his Mother, p. 32. Whatever a common Reader may think of the words which our Saviour used towards her; yet a Man of Learning might, and should know, that *γυνή*, which we render *Woman*, was in former days no Title of Disrespect or Indifference, as it seems to be in our Translation. There was a time when *Jesus* call'd his Mother by this

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Appellation, and yet was certainly neither *Snappish* nor *Waspish* towards her; for when he was hanging on the Cross, and recommending both his Mother to the Care of his beloved Apostle, and that Apostle to the Affection of his Mother, he said, *John* xix. 26. (z) *Woman, behold thy Son.* The word *γυνή* was an honourable Title, and often us'd by the best Writers, when the highest mark of Respect was intended; of which many Instances might be given; particularly we find the Polite (a) *Xenophon* putting this word into the mouth of one of the *Persian* Chiefs, when he was addressing himself to a Captive Lady of the highest Quality, and comforting her under her unfortunate Circumstances. The Expression is so common in this Sense, that I shall offer no more Instances of it; but pass on to the remainder of *Jesus's* answer, *What have I to do with thee?* These words are generally understood as a Rebuke to her, and so they may be without giving room for any Objection against the Letter of the Story, much more for the Conclusion which Mr. *W's* Friend has drawn from it: For it is probable, that she was desirous to see him work a Miracle, and that a little Vanity prompted her to this Desire; and was it an unsuitable Rebuke to tell her (for the words import no more), that in the business of manifesting his Glory by Miracles she was to leave him to do what he thought proper? This very Phrase is sometimes us'd in the Scriptures, where nothing of Anger is conceiv'd, where only some dislike is express'd, and a gentle Check or Rebuke is given; for can we suppose, that *David*, when (2 *Sam.* xvi. 10.) he said *What have I to do with you, ye Sons of Zeruah?* was Angry or *Waspish* with *Abishai* for proposing to kill *Shimei* who had curs'd him, when *Abishai* stuck by him so faithfully in that great Defection, and meant what he propos'd out of a Friendly affection to *David*? It was a Rebuke, it is true, and so was This which *Jesus* reply'd to his Mother: But it was a justifiable one; for whatever Obedience he owed to her as a Son, he ow'd none to her as a Prophet and Worker of Miracles: In this Capacity he was the *Son of God* only, there was no Relation between Him and the Virgin *Mary*; therefore in what she meant by saying *They have no Wine*, she exceeded her Authority, and was justly reprov'd for it. But is this of Weight to overthrow a Miracle? All the other Objections I have shewn to be False and Ill-grounded: this is the only one that has any Truth in it, and I will venture to leave it to the Judgment of any Impartial

(z) *γύναι, ἰδὲ ὁ υἱός σου.*

(a) *Ὁ γεραίτερος εἶπε, Θάρρει, ὦ γύναι, καλὸν μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἀνέκομεν καὶ τὸ σὸν ἄνδρα εἶναι, &c.* *Cyrop. Lib. 5. p. 317.*
Edit. Hutchinson.

man, whether the single Circumstance of our Saviour's rebuking his Mother in such a Case is sufficient to call in Question the Reality of a Miracle so particularly and so plainly related by the Evangelist.

I have now finished what I intended to say in vindication of these two Miracles of *Jesus*, his causing the Barren *Fig-tree* to wither, and his turning the *Water* into *Wine*; and I assure the Reader, that the same Ignorance and Disingenuity furnishes Mr. *W.* with his Objections against the rest of the Miracles: But, before I conclude, I must again take notice (as I have frequently done), that having in my First Part established the Resurrection of *Jesus* beyond all Doubt and Contradiction, I have laid a sure Foundation for the Credit of all the Miracles which the Evangelists have ascribed to him: Allow but That to have been a Real one, and you must allow all the rest which are reported by the same Authors. It is not enough to pick here and there a Hole in their Relation, and set up a few Objections against them, which the more Ignorant a man is, the more plentifully he may be furnished with: Nothing less than the shewing that some part of the Literal Story is absolutely Impossible to have happen'd, or that something which *Jesus* is said to have done is Absolutely Inconsistent with the Divine Perfections, I say nothing less than This can make a reasonable man Disbelieve, and even Then his Disbelief will go no farther than to the Circumstance which has This Weight lying on it. But the Objections, which Mr. *W.* has thrown out against the Miracles that have been consider'd, and which may be supposed to be the Best that his Party could furnish him with, are so Weak and Feeble, that while He and They are giving up their Character as Christians, they are forfeiting it too as Scholars: In this respect they are *vel Priamo miseranda manus*: at least they would be so, if Ignorance was their only Fault; but it has appeared to the Reader in many Instances, how little Regard the Author of those *Discourses* pays to Truth, how little even to the Certainty of being Detected in Falshoods: Shall such as These have any Influence on our Faith, who neither Believe nor are to be Believed? who when they stripp'd their own Religion of all its Faith, tore off so much of Morality with it; who with all the Arts and Cheats of Impostors carry on their attacks against Christianity as a Cheat and Imposture, thereby Practising what they Write against, and putting on the very Character which they would fix upon the Apostles? Whoever they be, that have been so carried away with the bewitching Pleasure of Novelty as to be fond of such Writings, tho' they may have some Excuse for their having been misled, yet they can have no Excuse for continuing in their Error: for, not only the Badness of the Cause is equalled by the Badness of the Methods

Methods with which it is supported; but the Writings of such Infidels are as Weak, as they are Dishonest: They are an Insult upon the Common sense of Mankind, and every Reader must have the lowest Opinion of such *Discourses*, as suppose either that they shall find men *Fools*, or that they shall make them so.

The End of the Third Part.



PART

PART *the* FOURTH.

CONTAINING,

*A Defence of the Literal Story of JESUS's
healing the INFIRM MAN at the
Pool of Bethesda.*

AND

*His healing the PARALYTICK, who was let down
thro' the ROOF.*



PON a careful Enquiry into these Miracles I found, that something New (to Me at least) offer'd itself to my thoughts; and some Passages, which I had met with in my Reading, seem'd to give a clearer Solution of the Difficulties started, than the Common one does: Particularly, in the Account of the Miracle wrought by the troubling of the Waters at *the Pool of Bethesda*, I found Reason to differ a little from the receiv'd Opinions of the Commentators on that Chapter, and what I have propos'd as New on that Head, I have all along endeavour'd to support by such Authorities, as may seem to make my Supposition appear at least not Improbable; This (methinks) may be said with some Certainty, that, if I am in the Right, Mr. *W.* is more clearly in the Wrong than upon any other supposition; tho' after all I am very sensible, that a Sufficient Answer may be given to all his Objections, without thrusting any Criticism or Conjecture of Mine upon the Reader as necessary in the Dispute.

BUT before I enter upon the Subject, I think it material to prepare the way with one Observation upon a Piece which Mr. *W.* lately published under the Title of *A Defence of his Discourses*, &c. where that Author endeavours to shift the State of the Controversy between Himself and his Opposers. The True Question, upon which I and others closed with him is This, *Whether the Literal Account of the Miracles ascrib'd to Jesus be True*; not, *Whether the Miracles (besides their Lite-*

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ral Meaning) may not have a Figurative and Allegorical one ; much less is it. Whether the Fathers turn'd all the Actions of *Jesus* into Allegory or not: For had He done nothing more than add a Spiritual Sense to them, or had he only try'd to shew that the Fathers delighted in making them Emblems of whatever their Wit and Fancy suggested, he might have gone on writing as long as he pleased, without any Opposers, and perhaps without any Readers.

FOR what is it to the Cause of Truth, whether the Fathers or He could find out more Meanings of *Jesus's* Miracles than the Evangelists thought proper to give us. But Mr. *W's* *Discourses* do expressly and frequently deny, that the Miracles of *Jesus* were *Truly and Really wrought* ; and he asserts, That, *Literally understood, they are full of Absurdities, Improbabilities, and Contradictions.* And yet in this *Defence*, p. 26. he would have us believe, in regard to the Story of the *Buyers and Sellers* driven out of the Temple, that *it is to no purpose to support the Letter of the Story against him, unless it can be prov'd, that the Miracle neither was nor could be a Shadow or Resemblance of something Future.* And the same he had said before concerning all the Miracles of *Jesus*, *Disc. 2. p. 70. viz.* that he, *who would write against him to the Purpose, must prove two things : That the Fathers did not hold Jesus's Miracles to be Typical and Figurative ; and That those Miracles neither will, nor can receive a Mysterious Accomplishment.* On the contrary, if the Learned Bishop of *St. Davids* and other Writers against Mr. *W.* should allow, that All the Fathers did affect to turn *Jesus's* Miracles into Allegory ; and if they should allow too, that their Allegories and Mr. *W's* are Just and Well-grounded, yet the Writings of Mr. *W's* Opposers might be full and proper Answers to His, because they support the Truth of the Literal Story, which he so often and so peremptorily denies: For we may clearly prove the Literal Meaning, tho' we don't attempt to disprove the Allegorical one, if they be two distinct things ; as every one of his *Discourses* plainly makes them, while it denies the Letter of the Miracles, and endeavours to set up the Allegory only. If He can consider them separately, so may We ; This Liberty I have taken, and shall again take in the ensuing Discourse; perhaps in some Instances I may allow, that the Miracles recorded in the Gospel were Typical ; for I have no Quarrels with Types and Figures: I only oppose one who would set them up to the Ruin of the Letter ; and the Drift of This and my preceding Discourses is only to shew, that the Miracles ascrib'd to *Jesus* were truly wrought by him, and that there is an Account of the Literal Story to be given, which is clear of all the Objections that Mr. *W.* has so unskilfully made to them.

In this view I proceed to consider

I. THE Story of the Miracle, or rather Miracles, wrought at the *Pool of Bethesda*; of which St. *John* chap. v. has given us a particular Account, and which Mr. *W.* (b) calls a *Camel, of a Monstrous size for Absurdities, Improbabilities, and Incredibilities*, and he has spent above twenty Pages in fixing these upon it.

BUT for the clearer Answer to all his Objections on this Head, the Reader is desir'd to observe that in this Narration of St. *John* there are two distinct Miracles to be separately consider'd, That which was wrought by the *Pool* after the Water of it was troubled; and That which *Jesus* wrought upon the *Infirm Man* who lay there: The former is only a Narration, in which our Saviour is not at all concern'd, nor the Miracle which he wrought on the *Impotent Man*: so that, if we could not account for the particular Circumstances that attended the Relation of the First, it would not in the least affect the Miracle of our Saviour's healing this Man: the Truth of which Fact only we are engag'd to vindicate. However because This is the Introductory Story in St. *John*, and because Mr. *W.* has been very large and strong in his Objections against the Letter of it, I shall begin there.

§. AGAINST the Sanative Virtue of the *Pool* in the Circumstances describ'd by the Evangelist, Mr. *W.* has made several Objections by way of Question; but before I give an Answer to his Questions, I shall lay before the Reader, what I conceive to be the true Account of the Story; and I do this the rather, because I think, that it has not been understood aright by the Generality of Commentators, whose Mistakes on this Article have helped to furnish our Author with some of those Difficulties, with which he has so heavily loaded this Miracle.

THE State of the Case (I think) was this: At *Jerusalem*, near the Place called the *Sheep-Market*, or rather the *Sheep-gate* (mention'd by *Nehem.* chap. iii. 1. and xii. 39.) there was a *Bath* built for the use of such of the Common People, as lov'd to swim and bathe themselves in the Water: This is the proper sense of the Word (c) *κολυμβήθρα*, used by St. *John* on this occasion, and by other Writers, and in the Old *Latin* Version (called the *Italic*) it was render'd by *Natatoria*, a *Bath* or *Swimming-place*. Nothing was more Common or more Useful

(b) Discourse 3. p. 33.

(c) Thus *κολυμβήθρα* signifies to swim, in *Acts* xxvii. 43. The old Translation of *Irenæus*, l. 2. c. 22. has *Paralyticum, qui juxta Natatoriam jacebat*: and the three very Ancient *Latin* MSS. of the Gospels, which, as *Calmet* says, contain the Old *Italic* Version before St. *Jerome* reform'd it, agree in rendring *κολυμβήθρα* by *Natatoria*, as may be seen by consulting the various Readings of those MSS. publish'd by *Calmet* at the end of his Commentary on the *Acts* of the Apostles.

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than such *Baths* in those warm Climates; *Josephus* (*d*) mentions some by this very name of *κολυμβήθρα* at *Jericho*, as us'd for the Exercise and Pleasure of Swimming; and it may be reasonably presum'd, that This at *Jerusalem*, and perhaps some others there, was built for the same purpose.

IT has (I confess) been commonly suppos'd by Commentators, that this *Bath* or *Pool* (as our Translation has it) serv'd either for washing of the Sheep before they were led into the Temple, or for washing the Entrails of Beasts sacrific'd in the Temple, or for receiving the Blood from the Trench round the Altar, which was thought to be convey'd hither by some subterraneous Channel; But those, who led the way in these Opinions, seem to have been (*e*) deceiv'd by joining, both in the *Greek* and the *Latin*, two words together in Construction, which have no relation to one another; besides, the proper sense of the word *κολυμβήθρα* is inconsistent with every one of these Opinions; and (which is more) these Opinions are not easily reconcileable with the Situation of the *Sheep-gate*, near which this *Pool* stood; for the *Sheep-gate* was on the South-East Wall of *Jerusalem*, and therefore a great part of the City lay between That and the Temple, as the accurate Dr. *Lightfoot* has shew'd in his *Harmony of the Evangelists*, p. 666. On all these Accounts therefore I believe, that what is commonly called a *Pool*, was a *Bath*, built and us'd only for the Sport and Exercise of Swimming; for which it could never have been fit, if it had serv'd for any purpose relating to the Sacrifices of the Temple.

AROUND this *Bath* were built (as St. *John* says) (*f*) five *Porches*, or rather *Portico's*, *σολαι*: of which sort *Herod* built several at *Tyre* and *Berytus*; and the Design of them all was for the Common People to walk in them under Covert in the Heat of the Day, if they had no mind to *Bathe*; and for such as had,

(*d*) Ταῖς κολυμβήθραις ἐπισκάνητες, αἱ μεγάλαι περὶ τῷ αὐλῷ ἐτύσχον, ἀνέψυχον τὸ θερμώτατον τῇ μεσημβρίας. *Antiq. Jud.* L. 15. c. 3.

(*e*) The Generality of the old *Greek* and *Latin* Commentators took *κολυμβήθρα* and *piscina* or *natatoria* to be us'd here, the one in the Dative Case, the others in the Ablative Case, and join'd them in Construction with *προβατικῇ* and *probatīcā*; in consequence of which Mistake, they thought that this *Pool* serv'd for the Purpose of Sacrifices in some one of the Ways before-mention'd.

(*f*) If the *Bath* or *Pool* was an oblong square (as That is, which modern Travellers now generally call the *Pool of Bethesda*), it is probable, that three sides of it had only a Single Portico, and the fourth a Double one; which was the Case of the Outer-court of the Temple, or *Court of the Gentiles*. That, which Mr. *Maundrell* saw (p. 108 of his *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*), had only three Portico's, but there might anciently have been five.

they were of use for them to dress and undress themselves in the Shade: The *Bath* and the *Portico's* therefore, serving for this purpose, might well have gain'd the name of *Bethesda*, i. e. *the House of Mercy or Kindness*, because the building them was a great Act of *Kindness* to the Common People, for whose sake they were erected, and whose Indispositions in hot Countries requir'd frequent Bathing. To suppose, that they took this Name from any miraculous Cures wrought there, is to suppose without Authority or Occasion, and I submit to the Reader whether Mine is not a more natural Account of the Matter.

AT this *Bath* about the Time of the *Feast*, ver. 1. (most probably the *Feast of the Passover*;) a great multitude of impotent Folk, of Blind, Halt and Wither'd lay in the *Portico's*, waiting for the moving of the *Water*; for (as St. John says) an Angel went down $\kappa\tau\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\epsilon\gamma\upsilon$ (g) at the season (i. e. of the Passover) and troubled the *Water*, and whosoever then first, after the troubling of the *Water* stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever Disease he had. This is St. John's Account, and from This it does not appear, that the Waters of this *Pool* or *Bath* had ever receiv'd this miraculously healing Virtue before or after the time of This *Feast*: The expression *at the season*, does (as the Note below shews) more Naturally confine it to this Passover, than suppose it to have been a Standing and an Annual Miracle:

(g) *At the season*: this is the Literal Translation of the Words $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\nu$; and not *at a certain season*, as we commonly render it, for then it should have been $\kappa\alpha\lambda\grave{\alpha}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\nu\ \tau\iota\nu\alpha$. The words $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\nu$ are us'd but in one other Place of the New Testament, viz. in Rom. v. 6. where we read, *When we were without strength, Christ $\kappa\alpha\lambda\grave{\alpha}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\nu$ dy'd for the Ungodly*, i. e. not in due time, but at the time of our being without strength. It is very often that we meet with $\kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\varsigma$ thus us'd, when the word which should mark what that time or season is, is understood, and not express'd: thus $\pi\epsilon\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\varsigma$ is us'd in Matt. viii. 29. and xxiv. 45. and 1 Cor. iv. 5. and $\epsilon\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron$ in Luke xii. 42. and xx. 10. and xxi. 8. and 1 Pet. v. 6. As some Word then may be here understood after $\kappa\alpha\lambda\grave{\alpha}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\nu$, so particularly the *Feast of the Passover* may; for we find many Instances in the LXX, where the time of the Passover is called $\kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\varsigma$, as in Exod. xxiii. 15, 17. and xxxiv. 18. Numb. ix. 3. and particularly ver. 7. $\pi\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\nu\epsilon\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\omicron\ \delta\omicron\upsilon\pi\omicron\nu\ \kappa\upsilon\tau\iota\omega\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\epsilon$, to bring a Gift unto the Lord at the season of it, i. e. of the Passover, mention'd in the foregoing verse. From all which I conclude, that the Phrase $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\omicron\nu$ here must be translated *at the season*, and that by it may be understood, the time of the Passover or Feast, which the Evangelist had spoken of at the beginning of the Chapter. I have but one thing more to add upon this head, which is, that these two words are not express'd at all in the above-mention'd Three Latin MSS. of Calmet, and Dr. Wilkins says that they are wanting in the Coptick, and many other Versions.

the least that can be said, is, that there is full as much Liberty from the Scripture story to make My Supposition as any other; and Mine has several other Circumstances in its favour, which are a weight upon the contrary Opinion: for whatever is Objected from the Silence of the *Jewish* Writers about this Miracle, is an Argument on my side as far as it is any Argument: But the Silence of the *Jews* on this head, in their Discourse with *Jesus*, has much more weight in it against a suppos'd Annual Miracle of a long standing, it being not very Easy to conceive, why, when They so often insist upon having God for their *Father*, they don't urge this standing Miracle at *Bethesda*, as a Proof of it; and why they so often mention the Miracles of *Moses* and the Prophets, without ever once mentioning so remarkable a thing, as a Miraculous Cure wrought at this Pool, in their own days, for many years together, about the time of the *Feast*: Whereas upon my Supposition, nothing of this kind can be any Objection; the greater the Silence, the stronger the Proof. But on this head I shall have occasion to say more by and by.

IT is well known that the *Feast of the Passover* lasted eight days, including the *Days of unleaven'd Bread*: and possibly this miraculous Quality of the *Bath* might have begun on the first day of it, or some few days before it: How the discovery of this its healing Virtue came to be made, we are not told: I should rather think, that it was owing to Accident than to any divine Revelation; it might be, that some *Jew* of an infirm or otherwise Diseas'd Constitution, bathing one day in this Pool for Pleasure and Recreation, might find himself cur'd all on a sudden, upon some violent Motion of the Water, which troubled it, and which he could not account for, there being no Wind stirring that was strong enough for that purpose. If he was thus cur'd, we may suppose, that upon hearing it others who were Diseas'd came there the same, or the next day, waiting for the troubling of the Water, and hoping for the same Extraordinary Relief; and what they thus hoped for, they are said to have found, whatever their Disease was, tho' only One, and he the First that stepped in, was cured upon each Motion of the Water: the Report of these Cures (we may suppose) drew every day greater Numbers together, the *Pool* being found to have this effect every day, and (for what we know) several times in a day.

FROM hence it is no wonder, if at length a great Multitude of Impotent Folk, Blind, Halt, &c. was got together at the *Pool*, when our Saviour pass'd by, which was on the *Sabbath-day*, or Third day after the *Passover*, and might be some days after the Miracle was begun.

THIS Motion of the Water is said by the Evangelist, to have been caus'd by the *Descent of an Angel* into the *Bath*; who might

therein follow a known Jewish way of speaking, not affirming that an Angel did visibly descend there, but only that there was such a Divine Effect, which (b) in the Language of the Scriptures, and in the Eastern way of Expression, is said to be wrought by Angels, who are *Ministring Spirits*, and perform the Will of God on such occasions.

THIS is the Account of the Story which I offer to the Reader, as every way Consistent with St. John's Narration, and in some parts necessarily following from it, and confirm'd by other Good Authorities: and my Account has this peculiar Advantage, that it is clear of all the Difficulties which Mr. W. would fasten upon the Story; For

HIS first Question is this, *What was the true occasion of the Angel's descent? Was it to wash and bathe himself, or to impart a healing Quality to the Water?* p. 40, 41. And the first part of this Question he founds upon a peculiar Reading of the *Alex.* and some other MSS. which have instead of κατέβαινεν the word (i) ἐλέετο: which This great Critick in the Greek Tongue thinks must necessarily signify, that the Angel *washed* or *bathed* himself; and therefore must suppose (as he says) *some bodily Defilement or Heat contracted in the Celestial Regions, that wanted Refrigeration or Purgation in these Waters.* But a little more Knowledge of the Greek Tongue, might have taught him, that λείδα in the most approv'd Authors signifies some-

(b) Grotius's Note here is, *Non quòd videretur Angelus, sed quòd persuasum esset Judæis talia à Deo, nonnisi per Angelos, agi; ita ex motu Aquæ præsentia Angeli intelligebatur, ut ex Terræ motu.* Mat. xxviii. 2. And thus when the Host of Sennacherib was destroy'd in one night (probably by a Pestilential Hot Wind), it is said, 2 Kings xix. 35. that an Angel of the Lord went out and smote in the Camp of the Assyrians, &c. where the Angelical Presence was only Visible in its Effects.

(i) The *Alex. Med. & Cypr. Greek MSS.* and the *Æthiop. Version*, agree in reading ἐλέετο: but all the other Greek MSS read κατέβαινεν, as the other Versions seem to have done. The Phrase καταβαίνειν ἐν κολυμβήθρα is the same as καταβαίνειν εἰς κολυμβήθραν; Verbs of motion in the Greek Language having ἐν with a Dative Case after them, as well as εἰς with an Accusative Case. So in Luke vii. 27. we read ἐξῆλθεν ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ, *went forth into all Judæa*: See also Mark i. 16. and Luke viii. 7, 15. Frequent Instances of the same are found likewise in the purest Greek Authors. Perhaps, if ἐλέετο was the original Reading, St. Luke's Sense of that word not being commonly known, the word κατέβαινε was put in the Margin of the Antient MSS. as one of the same sense, and more intelligible; and from the Margin it might creep into the Text of the less Accurate Copies of St. John's Gospel. But I offer this as Conjecture only.

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times no more than *καταβαίνειν* to plunge, or descend into, without having the Idea of washing or bathing annex'd to it, tho' it be the same Action, which those use, who go into the Water with the design of washing or bathing: It is probable, that this was all which *Elisha* meant, when he bid *Naaman* the Syrian *λέεσθαι* wash himself seven times in the River Jordan, 2 Kings v. 10. But what does Mr. W. think, that *Homer* means, when speaking of a Star's rising, he describes it as *λελάκειεν* Ὠκεανοῖο, i. e. having set or descended into the Ocean? *Iliad*. ε. ver. 6. Or what does he think, that *Virgil* understood by that part of *Homer's* fine Description of a high-mettled Horse broken loose, *Iliad*. ζ'. ver. 508.

Εἰωθὼς λέεσθαι ἐὺρρείδος ποταμοῖο.

when he imitates it thus in a Parallel Similitude,

——*Assuetus aquæ perfundi flumine noto?*

Æneid. XI. 495.

NO doubt but the *Latin* Poet thought, that he express'd all which the *Greek* one did; and it is certain, that the Sense of both Poets is no more than This, that the Horse us'd to plunge into the Water for the sake of Swimming.

IF the Angel then did not descend to *Cool* or *Cleanse* himself, and if he did not descend *Visibly* at all, we may see how Mr. W. is more disposed to be Merry than Wise, when he asks, *whether the Angel descended with his Head or his Heels foremost &c.*? p. 41.

BUT still he wants an Answer to the last part of his Question, *Whether the Angel descended to impart a healing Quality to the Water?* If he did (says he p. 41.) *why did only One diseased person at a time reap the benefit?* To which I have nothing to answer but that it pleas'd God to direct it thus: But if he means (as he seems to do) to expect an Account, why all who stepp'd into the *Pool* or *Bath* were not alike heal'd as well as the First, it may be answer'd, that in this case the Miracle of the Story would have been doubted, or deny'd, and by None (it is likely) more than by Himself: "A Fine Miracle!" he would cry; "don't many Medicinal Baths cure various kinds of Diseases, and multitudes of such as Labour under each Disease, provided their Case be a Curable one?" It is probable that his Language then would have been of this Sort: "Had only One been cur'd, the First that bathed every Morning, or the First that could get in after some invisible Motion of the Water, then there would have been a Great and Real Miracle? but now the Numbers make the Fact suspicious: it seems to have been a Natural Quality in the Waters, because it is so Universal; to make it appear a

“Miracle, its Effects should have been Confin’d and Limited to particular Times and Persons, or be otherwise so circumstantiated, as that the Power of God, and not of Blind Nature, might have appear’d in it.” I appeal to the Reader, whether from the Turn and Make of Mr. *W*’s Genius one might not expect such Objections as These, if the Case had truly been what he seems to require it should be: and therefore who would quarrel with so Reasonable a Circumstance of the Story as This is?

BY what has been said in the foregoing Account of this Miracle, the Reader is prepar’d to see the Captious Nature of some other Questions of this Author, viz. *How often did the Angel descend? How long before Christ’s Advent, and why not since?* p. 41. For (as I have shew’d) it does not appear from any part of the Evangelist’s Story, nor indeed from any other Good Authority, that this Sanative Virtue of the Pool ever happen’d before or after This *Feast* of the Passover: ‘Till the contrary be proved, let Mr. *W*. take for Answer, that it seems most probable, for the Reasons before given, that the *Pool of Bethesda* had this Miraculous Quality only at this Season, and that probably for several days together; that it operated above once in a Day, may as well be suppos’d as deny’d, because the Story is silent; all that we know being This, that, whenever the *Water was troubled*, the Healing Quality took effect on the *First that stepped in*.

BUT *why not since*, is the Burden of this Author’s Question: Because Providence so order’d it: Is not that a sufficient Answer to a meer Question? Would he have us be *Wise above what is written?* and know the Reason of things for certain, when those Reasons are not assigned?—All that we can do, is to guess; and if any supposition, that we can make, be consistent with the Story, and be favoured by other Parts of the Gospels, and at the same time be such as will effectually answer his Question, I hope that it will be allow’d me to offer such an one: tho’ I am far from pretending to lay any Weight upon it, and therefore shall be less concern’d, if it should appear not to have any sufficient Foundation. It is but Conjecture, and as such only I offer the following Account to the Reader.

THIS Feast of the Passover was the second which was celebrated, and this was the second time too that *Jesus* was present at *Jerusalem*, after he had enter’d upon his Ministry and begun to work Miracles. When he came up the first time, he seems to have had a Design only to celebrate the Passover in obedience to the Law, for he retir’d from *Jerusalem* soon after it was finish’d; and tho’ he wrought some Miracles there, yet we are not told whether they were of the Healing kind or not: We don’t read, that the *Scribes* or *Pharisees* were at that time enrag’d against him; and therefore his Departure from thence

thence into *Galilee* may have been owing to his own Choice of not designing then to come and settle in the work of his Ministry at *Jerusalem*: But when he had gone preaching and healing Diseases thro' all the Cities of *Galilee*, and thro' most other parts of the Country of *Judæa*, he came up at this second Passover to *Jerusalem*, probably with intent to fix his abode there, and shew that he was *the Son of God* by his Power over Devils and Diseases. What then if we should suppose, that Providence (by giving to *the Pool of Bethesda* this healing Quality at or a little before the beginning of this *Feast*) might intend to shew the *Jews*, that the Divine Power in *Jesus* was coming among them, and might mean the Miraculous Effect of this *Pool* for an Emblem only or Earnest of what *Jesus* was then preparing to do for them? We find, that God did in other Instances prepare the way for *Christ*; the Prophecies of the *Old Testament* were given for this purpose, and *John* the Baptist was declar'd his *Forerunner*. And why might not This Miracle be of the same Preparatory Nature with Them? I may add too, that this Conjecture seems the more Reasonable, when it is remembred, that, besides the Cure of this *Infirm Man*, *Jesus* healed another at this Passover, *who had a wither'd Hand*; and that he retir'd from the City, only because the Pharisees took Council against him how they might destroy him. Matt. xii. 14. which when he knew, he withdrew himself from them, ver. 15. But if they had not thus wickedly fought his Ruin, before his time of suffering was come, it may be gather'd from the Story as not Improbable, that he would have continued among them a long while, perhaps the whole time of his Ministry. I lay no Weight (as I said) upon all this: it is but Supposition and Conjecture drawn from some Circumstances which seem to favour it: but such as it is, it may suffice for an Answer to Mr. *W*'s Question, *Why the healing Quality was imparted to the Pool at That time, and not since?* I think it may be said, that the Answer is at least as Good as the Question.

WHEN this Questioner of Providence and its Vicegerents asks, *Why no better care was taken by Providence or the Civil Magistrate about the disposal of this Angelical favour, than to leave it to him that could first step in?* p. 42. He may know (if he will reflect a little), that Providence had done enough, and the Magistrate alone is concern'd in the Question: but if this Healing Power in the *Pool* was a New thing (as I shew'd it most Probable), and such as had not happen'd many Days, how does Mr. *W*. know that the Magistrates were yet convinc'd of the Reality of the Miracle? Or if they were, is he sure that they thought it proper to limit to particular Persons the Benefit of a Miracle which God had visibly left at large? Or can he shew that the Magistrates, so much

employ'd as they must have been at that busy Time of the Passover, had Leisure and Opportunity to make any Regulations about it?

WHAT (says he) *did the Blind, and the Halt, the Wither'd and Paralyticks do there?* p. 45. By which he would intimate that their Condition put them out of all hope of ever being the *First to step in*: Perhaps so: But they might have Friends ready there to assist them. And then to what purpose is this Question? We find that the *Infirm Man's* complaint turns upon his wanting such Assistance, and therefore we may suppose that he saw others provided with it; and the more they were, the less likely was he to get time enough to the Water.

THERE is another Objection, which Mr. *W.* has made, p. 47. made in the proper sense of the word, for it is wholly owing to his own Genius for Criticism: What We translate, *A certain Man was there, who had an Infirmary thirty and eight Years*, he says should, more truly according to the Original, be translated thus, (k) *A certain Man was there thirty and eight Years, which had an Infirmary*. This Translation must be allow'd to be truly an Original one; but all other Truth it wants, as the Reader will plainly see by the Note below; where it appears, that Our Version is most Certainly a Right one, and His most Probably a Wrong, I mean as to Grammar and St. *John's* Idiom; for as to the Sense he declares, that his Translation brings an Absurdity upon the Story, and for this reason alone it seems as if he chooses it. And yet upon no better a Foundation than such a poor piece of Criticism he falls out with the *Infirm Man* for waiting so long at the *Pool*: St. *John* is a *Romancer*, the *sick Man* is a *Fool*, and Mr. *W.* rails at his Patience, till he seems to lose all his Own.

(k) The Greek is. *Ην δέ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τετακονταοκτώ ἐτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀδυνείᾳ: which may literally be render'd thus, *There was a certain Man, who had passed (or been) thirty-eight Years in an Infirmary*: But if we join (as Mr. *W.* does) the words τετακονταοκτώ ἐτη with ἐκεῖ, and suppose the Man to have been *there* so long, then ἔχων ἐν ἀδυνείᾳ must be constru'd alone, and signify *having or being in an Infirmary*: But there is no Instance of such a Greek Phrase in all the New Testament. On the other hand, if we join τετακονταοκτώ ἐτη with ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀδυνείᾳ, we have several Expressions of this Evangelist to parallel it, as in Chap. xii. 17. *he found him τέσσαρας ἡμέρας ἥδη ἔχοντα ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ, having now been four days in the Grave*. And in the very next Verse to this, which we are considering, it is said of this *Infirm Man*, that *Jesus knew ὅτι πολὺν ἥδη χρόνον ἔχει, that he had now passed or been a long time in an Infirmary*. And therefore the common Translation is the only one, which is truly according to the Original.

I come now to the Last Objection (Mr. *W.* indeed has plac'd it in the Front) against the Truth of this Story, which is, that *Neither Josephus, nor any other Jewish Writers have made mention of it, p. 38.*

NOW whatever Weight their Silence may have against the supposition of such a Miracle lasting among the *Jews* for any considerable Number of Years, yet it favours and strengthens my Supposition; for, because no *Jewish* Writer mentions it, therefore it seems to have never happen'd except at this Feast: But perhaps he may expect a Reason, why, tho' it happen'd but once, this *Once* is pass'd over and unmention'd by *all* the *Jewish* Writers. If Mr. *W.* knows any thing of these matters, he might remember, that the *Jews* who wrote in or about *Christ's* time are very few in Number, except the Authors of the New Testament, tho' his Expression *All* would insinuate that there was a great Plenty of them. The Writers of the two *Targums*, with *Philo* and *Josephus*, are *All*; the first of which wrote their *Paraphrases* on the Old Testament before this Miracle was vouchsafed to the *Pool*; *Philo* indeed and *Josephus* wrote after it; but *Philo* lived at a great distance from the Fact, as far as *Alexandria* in *Egypt*; and *Josephus* was not born 'till after this had happen'd. Is not here room then to suppose, that a Miracle, which lasted so few Days (as I have shew'd), might never have come to their Ears? Or, if they had heard of it, might not they both have been in doubt, for want of knowing all its Circumstances, whether it was not a Natural Effect rather than a Divine one? Might not *Philo* particularly, who was jealous of the Honour of the *Jewish* Temple in *Egypt*, have look'd upon it as an Artifice of the *Jewish* Priests at *Jerusalem* to shew, that God was visibly among them, and to argue from thence, that he did not approve of any Temple erected to his Service elsewhere? But for *Josephus* we have not This to say; he was a Worshipper at the Temple in *Jerusalem*, he liv'd and was brought up there, and could not He have known the Truth of the Case? If Mr. *W.* should be dispos'd to ask this Question, I would remind him that *this* great Historian was not so Fair a Dealer in some Instances, as might be expected. What he wrote, he wrote for the Information of the *Greeks* and Learned *Romans*, who were Heathens, and he seems all along in his Histories to be very tender of dwelling too much upon Miracles: he has omitted the mention of some, and has left it in doubt with his Readers, whether natural Causes might not be assign'd for others of those very Miracles of *Moses*, which he undoubtedly did Believe and Teach too, as he was a *Jewish* Priest: The Case was, that he was afraid to make his History appear *Incredible* to his Readers, and therefore he softened some things which he was oblig'd to mention, and

wholly omitted others which had no Publick Consequence: An Instance of this (among many others) we have in what he says concerning the Passage of the *Israelites thro' the Red-Sea*; that the Fact might not seem (1) *incredible* (as he expresses himself), he puts in a Doubt, Whether the Parting of the Waters on that occasion was *caus'd by the Command of God, or by the Natural course of things*, and refers (as to a Parallel Event) to what befell *Alexander* and his Army at the *Pamphylian Sea*.

FROM one of this turn, is it to be expected, that He should relate this Miracle at the *Pool*, so much less Remarkable than that of *Moses*? *Josephus's* silence therefore about this Story of the *Pool* is no more an Argument against it, than Mr. *W's* Outcries are: It may be True, tho' the One has said nothing concerning it; and notwithstanding all that the Other has said against it.

AFTER all, let Mr. *W.* tell me, to what End and Purpose should St. *John* romance in this particular Story: Did this Miracle do any Honour to *Jesus*? Or had it any necessary Connection with that which he wrought on the *Infirm Man*? If St. *John* had not known it to be True, or at least if the current Report of the *Jews* had not run this way, would he have mention'd it, when the Cure that his Master wrought was equally the same Miraculous one, whether this *Pool* had ever had such a Healing Quality or not? These Questions I leave with him, in return for the Many which he has ask'd about this Story; and I now call upon him to allow (as he says he will) St. *John's* word to pass sooner than another Man's, if the Account was not loaded with *Improbabilities*, p. 39. I have taken the Load off from it, and therefore I hope that he will permit us to take the benefit of his Concession.

2 §. BUT it is time to come to the other Part of the Story, which we are more nearly interested in, I mean the Miraculous Cure, which *Jesus* perform'd upon the *Man, who was there at the Pool, and had had an Infirmary for thirty and eight Years*.

TO this Mr. *W.* Objects two things,

THAT *Jesus*, by healing only One out of the great multitude of Impotent Folk at the *Pool*, shew'd either want of Power, or want of Mercy and Compassion, p. 49, 50. and

THAT, because we don't know what the *Man's* Infirmary was, there neither is, nor can be proved to be any thing supernatural in it, p. 34, 53.

(1) Θαυμάσει μὴδὲς τὸ λόγῳ ὡς ἐξ ἱστορίας, εἰ ἀρχαίοις ἀνθρώποις εὐρέθη σωτηρίας ὁδὸς καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης, εἴτε καὶ βέλυσιν Θεῶν, εἴτε κατ' αὐτόματόν· ὅποτε καὶ τοῖς περὶ Ἀλέξανδρον, &c. *Antiq. Jud.* l. 2. c. 16.

TO the First of these Objections it may be answer'd, that *Jesus, who knew what was in Man*, might know this *Infirm Man* to be the Fittest Object on account of his Good Disposition to receive and be thankful for such a Gracious Favour; or *Jesus* might consider him as more Helpless than the Rest, because (as the Man himself said) *he had no one, when the Water was troubled, to put him into the Pool*; or if neither of these two Reasons will satisfy Mr. *W.* that which St. *John* assigns should (one would think) be sufficient not only to answer his Question, but to have prevented it: for St. *John* ushers in the Account of this Man's Cure with saying, *Jesus knew that he had been now a long time in that Case*, ver. 6. His Distemper had continued on him for thirty-eight Years; and was not that a Circumstance to move Compassion? Might not that justify the singling of him out of the Number, as the properest Object for Relief?

AND how does it appear from hence, that there was any want of Power in *Jesus*? for surely by the same Power with which he healed One, if it was Miraculous, he might heal Many: all Cures are alike to a Divine Hand: Admit that *Jesus* wrought one, and you must admit that he could have wrought more, if he had pleas'd: When it is said that he *could do no mighty works at Nazareth*, Mark vi. 4. it is not meant that he had not Power to do them, as This Commentator on the New Testament understands it (Disc. 2. p. 15.) but that *Jesus* did not or would not, because they, with whom he was, were not qualify'd with any Good Dispositions to make a right use of them. If Mr. *W.* should think this a Comment of my Own upon the Words, I could shew it to be St. *Matthew's*, chap. xiii. 58. and support it better than He ever did any Comment of his Own; for I could give him Proofs (and those as many as he shall call for) that ἐν ἐδωάτο must in many passages necessarily have this signification.

BUT Mr. *W.* is not so soon satisfy'd; for he goes on to say, that St. *Matthew*, St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke* tell us such Stories of *Jesus's* healing Power, as would incline us to think, that he cur'd all wherever he came, because he healed all manner of Diseases, p. 50. They may incline a heedless Reader of their Gospels to think so, or a Captious one may say this whether he thinks so or not: For if the Evangelists have said that *he healed all manner of Diseases*, does it follow from thence that they say *he heal'd all wherever he came*? if he cur'd some who were Blind at one time, the Lame at another, and so at different times cured the Diseas'd of every kind, or if he cur'd all sorts at any one time, this is enough to make good the Assertion; all that can be concluded from it is, that there was no sort of Disease which *Jesus* did not shew himself able to cure: and the Evangelists expressly tell

tell us the very contrary to what this Author concludes; for Instance, *St. Mark*, chap. vi. 4. says, that at *Nazareth* he could (i. e. would) do no mighty works, save that he laid his Hands upon a few sick Folk and healed them; there were others therefore in the same condition whom he did not heal. The Evangelists (I grant) do often speak of *Jesus's* healing all manner of Diseases as *St. Matt.* chap. xii. 15. says, that, when the Multitude follow'd *Jesus*, he healed them all, and chap. xiv. 14. that when they followed him on foot out of the Cities into a Desert place, he was mov'd with Compassion toward them and healed them. But should it not be consider'd, that in both these Cases those, who were healed, were such as followed *Jesus*, and thereby manifested their Belief that he was come from God, and was therefore able to heal them? In this firm persuasion they left their habitations and came to him, as the Learned Bishop *Chandler* had express'd himself, and thereby guarded his Assertion from that very Exception which *Mr. W.* has made to it: And was This the Case here, at the Pool? The great Multitude, that was present at it, *Jesus* found there when he pass'd by; they came not to him, so far from it that they lay there in hopes of being cur'd by other means than *Jesus's* Power. What then? if some Evangelists say that *Jesus* healed all the sick that followed him, does *St. John* give a Contrary Account, when he tells us that at this Pool *Jesus* did not heal above one of those who did not follow him?

HIS second Objection to this Miracle is, that, *because we don't know what the Man's Infirmary was, there neither is, nor can be prov'd to be any thing supernatural in it.* On the contrary I undertake to shew, that, let the Infirmary have been of what sort soever he pleases, provided he allows it to have been a Distemper, there was a Miracle wrought in the Cure of it. The Original word *ἀσθενεία* is always in the Gospels us'd on these occasions to signify a Disease or Distemper; and the Fathers generally thought this Man's to have been a Palsy; but we will take the lowest Sense of the Word, and suppose it was only a Weakness in his Limbs; yet consider that it was a Weakness of thirty-eight Years Continuance; and as it was a Confirm'd one, so it had prevail'd upon him to a Great degree, for he was forc'd to have his Bed or Chair brought along with him to the Pool side. Such was his deplorable condition, and yet upon *Jesus's* only saying to him, *Rise, take up thy Bed, and walk*, we are told that he was immediately made whole, and took up his Bed and walked. The Cure, you see, was effected in a Moment, and was so Compleat an one, as that from being oblig'd to rest himself on his Bed, he was immediately able not only to walk, but to carry his Bed: and is there here no evident mark of a Supernatural Power in *Jesus*? No, says *Mr. W.* p. 53. for Instances may be given of Infirmities of a long Duration,

tion, which in time, and especially in Old Age wear off. How Old Age should be a Cure, I am not at leisure to enquire; but allowing it, what are such *Instances* to the purpose here? for this Man's *Infirmity* is not represented as *wearing off* by time, but as healed in a Moment: and therefore Mr. *W.* contradicts the Evangelist, when he adds, *Who knows but this was the Case of the Impotent Man; whose Infirmity Jesus observing to be wearing off, bid him be gone, and take up his Couch, for he would soon be made whole?* Mr. *W.* may know that this was not the Case; for St. *John* tells him, that the Man was *immediately made whole*.

STILL Mr. *W.* has one Refuge; for he supposes, that such Cures as these may be perform'd without a Divine Power, by the *Help of Imagination* only, p. 35. This Topick he insists upon here, and elsewhere in his Discourses, and therefore I shall consider it distinctly. That there may in many Cases have been Cures of Chronical Diseases brought about by the help of a strong Imagination, this Author supposes; and I will not call his Supposal in question. However this we may be Certain of, that in every Case, which we have any credible Account of, there is one Circumstance which plainly distinguishes them from the miraculous Cures wrought by *Jesus*, viz. They were never effected at once, and in a Moment: But when Surprise, Joy, and a strong Faith that he should be cur'd, had so work'd upon the Patient, as to give a new Turn and Motion to his Spirits, and to the Juices of his Body, he has only begun from that Moment to find an Amendment; and the Impression of the same Passions remaining strong upon him afterwards, he has recover'd by Degrees, and in Length of time the Cure has been compleated, Nature helping to finish what the Imagination had imperfectly begun: This may be affirm'd to be the true Account of all those Chronical Diseases, such as the *King's Evil*, &c. which this Author supposes to have ever been cur'd by the *Help of Imagination*.

BUT it is Remarkable, that in this Miracle, which is before us, there is no Room to suppose any Help from the *Imagination*; for the Infirm Man did not so much as know *Jesus*, even after he was healed; *he wist not who it was*, that had bid him *take up his Bed and walk*, as St. *John* assures us, Verse 13. and when *Jesus* said to him at the Pool, *Wilt thou be made whole?* it is plain by his Answer (*Sir, I have no Man when the Water is troubled, &c.*) that he expected nothing less than to be heal'd by a Divine Power in *Jesus*. In this case then how could *Imagination* contribute to his Cure? It all lay the other way, against *Jesus's* Power, and if it operated at all, would more naturally have prevented a Cure than forwarded it. Let us never than be told for the future, that this Infirm Man's Cure was owing to *Imagination*, when it appears, that he knew not who

who *Jesus* was, and was waiting for Relief from another Quarter, of which too he almost despair'd.

FROM what has been said, it may be concluded that the Cure, wrought by *Jesus* upon the Infirm Man, *was and is prov'd to be a Supernatural one, whatever his Infirmary was*; and for this Conclusion, I have not only the Reasons before-mention'd, but Mr. *W*'s own Confession, Disc. 4. p. 9. where, in the *Blind Man's* Case, he allows, that, *if Jesus had us'd no Medicines, if with a Word of his Mouth he had cured the Man, and he had Instantaneously recover'd, as the Word was spoken, here would have been a Real and Great Miracle, let the Blindness or Imperfection of the Man's Sight before be of what kind or degree soever.* Every Circumstance, which he requires towards making a True Miracle in the *Blind man's* Case, is exactly found in this *Infirm Man's*; and therefore I hope that Mr. *W*. will be convinc'd, if not by what I have said, yet by what he himself has said, that the Literal Story of this Miracle shews it to be a *Real and Great one.*

II. ANOTHER Miracle of *Jesus*, which gives great Offence to Mr. *W*. on Account of the Literal Story, is (*m*) his *Healing the Paralytick, who was let down thro' the Roof of the House where Jesus was at Capernaum.*

THIS Story he calls the *most Monstrously Absurd, Improbable, and Incredible of any, according to the Letter*, p. 51. This is His way of entering upon every Miracle, he describes every one as the Worst; but the Reader has already seen so much of his manner of handling Miracles, as not to be overborne with such a General Attack as This: What Mr. *W*. has to offer in proof of this Assertion, shall be fully consider'd, after I have laid before the Reader in one view the True Circumstances of the Story.

JESUS came to *Capernaum* (*Mark* ii. 1.) and entring into a House where he had been accusom'd to lodge, the People of the City hearing of it, gather'd together about the House in great Numbers, so that *there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the Door*, ver. 2. On this Occasion *Jesus* being within the House *preached the Word to them*: If he was in a Ground-Room, by the τὰ πρὸς τῷ θύρῳ may be meant the *Porch* or *Vestibule* of the House; but if he was in an Upper-Room (which is more likely), these Words may be understood of the *Area*, or *Court-Yard*, or *Space* between the *Outer-Wall* and the *House* itself: And in this Case it may be presum'd, that he taught the Crowd from some *Window* of the *Upper-Room*, so as that those who were within the *Room* where he was, and

(*m*) Mr. *W*'s Discourse 4. p. 51. The Story is recorded by St. *Matt.* chap. ix. St. *Mark*, chap. ii. and St. *Luke*, chap. v.

those who were Below in the Yard might all at once hear his Doctrine. The Story being silent about the Floor in which *Jesus* was, we may choose that Supposition which most favours the Literal Account.

IT is well known both from the Sacred Writers and others, that the *Jewish* Houses (as they always are in the Eastern Countries) were built low, having seldom above Two Floors or Stories; and that the Tops of them (called *δώματα*) were not covered with sloping Roofs as Ours are, but were flat, and surrounded with Battlements breast-high to prevent falling, as God himself had commanded, *Deut.* xxii. 8. Upon these flat Tops of their Houses the *Jews* us'd to walk in the Cool of the Day, as *David* did, *2 Sam.* xi. 2. or to sit at any Hour of the Day under a Tent or other Cover to serve them for a Shade; thus a Tent was pitch'd for *Abshalom* on the House-Top, *2 Sam.* xvi. 22. And it was not unusual with the *Jews* to perform Religious Worship there, for not only the *Jews* burnt Incense upon them to all the Host of Heaven, as *Jerem.* tells us, chap. xix. 13. but *St. Peter* is said in *Acts* x. 9. to have been praying upon the House-Top about the sixth Hour. And this Custom is farther confirm'd by the Command which our Saviour gave to his Disciples, *Matt.* x. 27. that, what they heard in the Ear, they should preach upon the House-Tops: Which Command seems to intimate too, that the *Jewish* Houses were not commonly higher than Two Stories, for otherwise the House-Tops would have been too high for any to have preached from them so as to be heard.

AND as their Houses were thus Low, and the Roofs of them Flat, so there was a Way from within the House out upon the Roof by a Pair of Stairs, at the Top of which was (n) a Door which lay even with the Roof, but was lifted up upon occasion for a Passage out, and had no doubt some fastening to secure the House from Thieves.

NOR was This the only way up to the Roof, for on the Outside too of the House, the *Jews* had (o) as other Nations) a fix'd Pair of Stairs or Ladder, by which they could ascend from the Ground to the Roof without entring into the House.

THE former of these Assertions appears plainly from our Saviour's Advice to the *Jews*, when speaking of the Swiftmess with which the General Destruction was to overtake their Nation,

(n) See *Lightfoot's* Quotations to this purpose out of the *Talmud*, where it is called *the Way of the Roof*.

(o) Among the *Greeks* too the same Custom seems to have prevail'd; for in the *Phœnissæ* of *Euripides*, *Antigone* goes out of the House, and by a *καλίμυξ* made of Cedar mounts up to the Roof, as may be seen by comparing ver. 99, 100 and 201 together.

he says, *Mark* xiii. 15. *Let him that is on the House-Top, not go down into the House, neither enter therein to take any thing out of the House.* And the latter Assertion may be fairly drawn from the same Words of our Saviour, because the Advice supposes that there was another and a nearer way of descending from the House-Top, which is not to be understood (we may be sure) of venturing their Necks by throwing themselves down from it; nor can it well be understood of any other than a Pair of Stairs or standing Ladder plac'd on the Outside of their Houses.

THIS then being generally the Fashion of the *Jewish* Houses, was probably the Fashion of That at *Capernaum*: where, while *Jesus* was preaching to the People, and while the Room where he stood was filled, and even the Space about the Door below was crowded with Hearers, a Man sick of the *Palsy* was brought in a Couch or (p) sort of Elbow Chair, by four Persons who carried him: And when his Bearers could not find a Way thro' the Crowd about the Door, because the Multitude was so Great and so very Attentive, they bethought themselves of going round the House, and getting at *Jesus* by another way; which was to carry the Paralytick up the Stairs on the Outside of the House, and by that Method they brought him up upon the Roof: When they were got thus far, it seems that they found the Door (or *Way of the Roof*, as the *Jewish* Rabbins call it) shut and fasten'd, by which they had hoped to convey the sick Man down into the Room where *Jesus* was. To work then the Bearers go, and force open the Door of the Roof, which *St. Mark* expresses by ἀπερέσασαν τὴν στέγην, *they uncover'd the Roof*, i. e. (q) they open'd the Door, which lying Even with the Roof was a Part of it, when it was let down and shut: And because they us'd Force in opening the Door, *St. Luke* speaks of

(p) *St. Mark* calls it κρᾶτταλος, and *St. Luke* κλινίδιον: so that these two words are synonymous. Now *Hesychius* explains the word σκιμπόδιον by εὐτελὲς κλινίδιον μονοκοίτιον, from whence it may be remark'd that there were κλινίδια no larger than for One person only, and of a much smaller size than the word *Bed* conveys an Idea of to an *English* Reader. And this seems to be the Size of the *Bed* or *Chair* in this place; for tho' Four persons help'd to carry the Sick man in it, yet it was no larger than what He alone could carry, when he was heal'd by *Jesus*, as appears by the Story.

(q) That this is the Sense of *St. Mark's* words, appears from considering, that if the Door resembled the Trap-doors at the Top of some of our Houses, and if, when let down, it lay even with the Roof, it was properly a Part of the Roof; and of consequence the lifting or forcing it up was *uncovering the Roof*.

them

them as (r) ἐξορύξαντες *breaking it up*, or rather *pulling it out* of the Frame. And having done this, they let down the Couch and the Sick Man upon it (probably two of them going first down to receive the Bed, and the other two letting it gently down into their Arms) which in St. Luke's Phrase is διὰ τῶν κερძῶν καθῆκαν, they let him down thro' the tiling, i. e. thro' the Roof, which, except where the Door was, was pav'd with (s) Tiles: By these means they brought the Paralytick into the Room, and found no difficult matter to place him in the midst before Jesus. Upon this Jesus seeing how great the Faith of this Man and his Bearers was, who had taken so much pains to get at him, was pleas'd, on this occasion, to heal the Paralytick in a Miraculous manner, as the Sequel of the Story assures us.

IF this Account be a True, or at least a Probable one, as it seems to be both from the Account itself, and the Notes subjoin'd to it, we may be able to give a satisfactory Answer to the Charge of Absurdities which Mr. W. has brought in such Plenty against the Literal Story.

HE begins with asking, *What did the People so throng and press for? Was it (says he) to see Jesus work Miracles? then the People frustrated their own Expectations by not making way for the Paralytick.* But tho' the Intent of some that crowded the Door might be to be healed by him, yet it is

(r) This word ἐξορύξαντες is omitted in the *Camb. Greek MS.* and it is not express'd in the *Old Latin MS.* of the *Abby of Corbie*, nor indeed in the *Syr. Persic.* and *Æthiop. Versions.* But there is no need to suppose the *Greek* word not to be genuine; for we may understand by it, no more than *pulling*, or *forcing* the Door out of its Frame, without any digging, or using of Instruments for that purpose: The *Vulg.* has *patefacientes*, which comes to the same in effect with ἐξορύξαντες, and does not imply, that there was any digging us'd in the opening of it: but only that the Door was broken open, or pulled out, in which Sense St. Paul uses this very word, *Gal. iv. 15.* τὰς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες, *pulling out your Eyes*, i. e. by force, but not by digging, in the proper and strict meaning of the word. It may be observ'd too, that the Couch or Chair not being a Large one (as we shew'd in the Note (p) p. 78.) it might be let or carried down, with the sick Man upon it, without widening the Passage, or making any Hole about it.

(s) Κέραμοι and τέγῳ, (or σέγῳ) are synonymous words in the *Greek Authors*, as *Steph.* in voce κέραμῳ informs us; who adds, *Pollux tradit non suo tempore solum, κέραμον fuisse vocatum ipsum τέγῳ, sed Aristophanem quoque ita appellasse in Cocalo:* And the same thing may be observ'd by comparing, *ver. 1286.* of *Aristoph. Vespæ* together with the Note of the Ancient Scholiast upon it,

probable

probable that the Greater part might have come to hear his *Doctrine* (with which St. *Luke* tells us, Chap. iv. 32. that they had been *astonished*, when *Jesus* was the last time among them); and they certainly who came on this Account did not *frustrate* their own Expectations in not giving way to this Paralytick: on the contrary, if they had retir'd to make room for him, then they would have furnish'd Mr. *W.* with more Ground for this Objection.

BUT he goes on, *Was it then to hear Jesus preach?* No (says he) for *Capernaum* was *Jesus's* own Country, and therefore he was without Honour there. The Fact is false, and therefore his Conclusion from it must be groundless; for *Capernaum* was not *Jesus's* own Country, but *Nazareth*, which the Evangelists justly call so, because he lived there for the best part of thirty Years. It is said indeed by the Evangelists, that *Jesus* had been twice at *Capernaum* before this time; but of his first time of going thither we read, that he *continued there not many days*, John ii. 12. When he went the second time, tho' St. *Matt.* chap. iv. 13. says that he *κατῴκησεν* in *Capernaum*, yet from (1) St. *Mark's* account of the matter it seems as if *Jesus* staid there but one Day and one Night: If I should allow Mr. *W.* the most that he can possibly draw from it, yet his Abode there must have been but for a few days; and with this Account St. *Matthew's* Word *κατῴκησεν* well agrees, which may as well be render'd *he sojourn'd* or *housed* there, as *he dwelt* there: This *Leigh* has shewn in his *Critica Sacra*. I confess that, tho' no Evangelist calls *Capernaum* *Jesus's* own Country, yet St. *Matthew*, ix. 1. seems to mean this Place when he calls it *Jesus's* own City: Here Mr. *W.* may think (if he pleases) that I yield up the Point, and grant him, tho' not the same, yet something Equivalent to what he asserted. But I would advise him not to triumph too soon, for I assure him that this Concession will never serve his purpose: Tho' *Jesus* had been but twice at *Capernaum* before this Time we are speaking of, and had staid there so little a while each time; yet, after the Cure of this Paralytick, *Jesus* during the rest of his Life frequently went down to *Capernaum*, and made long Abodes there: He seems to have chosen it for the Ordinary place of his Residence, and therefore St. *Matthew* (who wrote his Gospel after the Death of *Jesus*) might probably enough call it *his* own City, tho' it had not a Right to that Name at the time when *Jesus* heal'd there the Man who was sick of the Palsy. So that, if *Capernaum* was not *Jesus's* own Country in any Sense, nor *his* own City at that time when the People flock'd to hear him, the Proverb, *that a Prophet is*

(1) See chap. i. ver. 21, 29, 32, and 35. compar'd together.

without honour in his own Country, is no Objection to this Circumstance of the Story. If the Evangelists may be believ'd, we find, that, the last time before this Appearance of *Jesus* in *Capernaum*, *all the City was gather'd together at the Door*, where he was, *Mark i. 33.* and *they were astonish'd at his Doctrine, for his word was with Power*, *Luke iv. 32.* If he left them then in such Amazement, it is no wonder, that at this third time of his coming they flock'd about him in great Numbers.

BUT *why* (says *Mr. W.*) *had not the Paralytick and his Bearers the Patience to wait till the Crowd was disperfed?* The Man at the *Pool of Bethesda* had too much Patience, it seems, and This Man too little: Any thing will serve for an Objection, I perceive; But if this Paralytick and his Bearers had not Patience, to *Mr. W's* Size, what is that to the Miracle? And yet perhaps they were not so blameable for their Eagerness, as he imagines: For how could they know but that *Jesus* might leave the City as soon as he had done preaching, and before the Crowd was well disperfed? If this was their Fear, it was no Unlikely one to happen; for when *Jesus* was last among them, the Crowd continued about his Door till Night (very probably till late at Night, as the Circumstances seem to shew), and he left the City *in the Morning a great while before Day*, *Mark i. 35.* And why might not his Departure be as sudden now? Thus the Sick Man and his Bearers might have reason'd; and if they did, they reason'd better than *Mr. W.* has done in any part of his Discourses, at least than he does in what follows.

IF they could not (says he) *get to the Door of the House for the Press, of consequence they could not come at the Sides of it.* Some men have their peculiar ways of arguing, and this *Mr. W.* may call one of His, without fear of Envy. For where is the Consequence? If the Door was crowded, must that whole Side of the House be so too? Or if that Side was crowded, had the House no other Sides? May it not have had Three others? And why will not he allow One of them to have been Clear for the Paralytick to have come up to it? if the Crowd came to hear *Jesus* teach, it seems most probable that they were all got together on that Side only from whence he was teaching.

WELL, but the Sick Man (says he p. 57.) *was hawl'd and heaved up to the Top of the House with Ropes and Ladders.* Here he doubts not but he has got hold of an Absurdity in the Literal Story; but he has no fast hold of it, as will appear; for there was no need of *hawling* or *heaving*, of *Ropes* or *Ladders* to be brought, if my Account of the Jewish Houses be a True, or even a Probable one. All, that the Bearers had to do, was to carry the Sick Man round about

by some private way to that side of the House, where the Stairs or Ladder was, which led from the Ground to the House-Top: up these Stairs they carried him with no more trouble than they had been at to bring him down the Stairs of his own House.

STILL Mr. *W.* is not satisfy'd: He has Absurdities in Store to charge the Literal Account with; such as *uncovering the Roof*, and *breaking up Tiles, Spars and Rafters*; and *making a Hole capacious enough for the Man and his Bed to be let thro'*, p. 57. *It was well* (says he) *if Jesus and his Disciples escap'd with only a Broken Pate, by the falling of the Tiles, and if the rest were not smother'd with Dust*, p. 58. But here Mr. *W.* raises a *Dust* without occasion; for if there was (as I shew'd to be Probable) a Door on the Roof of the House which lay Flat and Even with the Roof, the Bearers had nothing to do but to force and pull it Open: and for this they might only draw some Nails, and take off the Hinges, or they might only break part of the Door or Door-Frame: All which might be done without raising any troublesome *Dust*, or breaking the *Pate* of any one below with the *Tiles*, even tho' we should suppose that this Door of the Roof was directly over the Room, where *Jesus* and his Disciples were: But why may not we suppose that the Stairs up to the Roof, and the Door at the Top of them were *without* the Room, as they commonly are among Us? If they were, what will become then of Mr. *W.*'s fancied Absurdity? In this Case the raising of some Dust, and the dropping of a few Tiles would fall short of all the mischief which he (it seems) is so very apprehensive of.

MR. *W.* has (I perceive) look'd into some of our Commentators on this Chapter, and takes notice that Dr. *Lightfoot* and Dr. *Whitby* have both maintain'd, that the Roofs of the *Jewish* Houses were Flat, and had a Door in them, by which the *Jews* us'd to ascend to the Tops of their Houses, p. 58. But he doubts whether what these Learned Men have said comes up to the Case here, and is consistent with the several Expressions us'd by St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* on this occasion: That it is consistent, I have already shew'd; and therefore I shall only take notice of what he adds, *To indulge them in their Notion, I may ask them, What occasion was there then of widening the Door-way, and breaking down the Sides of it?* p. 59. There was no occasion, I believe, nor is any mention made of the Bearers doing this; the word *ἰσχυραντες* (as I said before) not necessarily implying any more than that they pull'd the Door open by force: and therefore if these be all the Objections which Mr. *W.* has to make against the Notions of those Learned Men, they may still pass for Able Commentators, in the Number of which Mr. *W.* will never be reckon'd.

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ALL this while (says Mr. *W.* pag. 58.) *where was the Good Man of the House?* He was present, we may suppose; but if so little mischief was done by the Entrance made for the Sick Man and his Bed, the Good man of the House had not all the Provocation, which the Question supposes: in Crowds and Throngs Men are content to bear some small Inconvenience: it is generally in vain for them to complain of a Mob, whose Eagerness is too great to be restrain'd by the Outcry of One Man: and perhaps this Master of the House might be so attentive to *Jesus's* preaching that he might not perceive what was doing above at the Door, till it was done and the Entrance made; especially if the Door and the Stairs leading up to it were without the Room where *Jesus* and He were: or (it may be) he was Unwilling to disturb such heavenly *Doctrine* upon so slight an Occasion as the breaking Open a Door, by those, whose only Motive was to bring a Sick Man before *Jesus*, that he might be heal'd by a Miracle: or (for what Mr. *W.* knows to the contrary) he did call out to forbid their forcible Entrance into his House, tho' to no Purpose: These and many other Suppositions may be made, and any one of them (I think) is an Over-match for Mr. *W's* Question.

THE last Demand which he has to make on this Head, is, *Why did not Jesus, to prevent this Trouble and Damage to the House, ascend thro' the Door-way to the Top of it, and there heal the Poor Man?* To which Question he requires an Answer that *will consist with the Wisdom, the Goodness and Honour of Jesus;* p. 60. But if the *Trouble* of the Bearers, and the *Damage* done to the House was so small as I have represented it, no Objection can be form'd from hence to the Disadvantage of any of these Qualities in *Jesus*: For his healing the Paralytick was equally an Act of *Goodness*, whether he went up to the Man, or the Man was suffer'd to come down to Him: The Pains, that the Sick Man and his Bearers took to get at *Jesus*, shew'd the Strength of their Faith, and on that Account it was not Improper to permit them to shew how fit Objects they were of *Jesus's* Compassion. But I may ask this Author, Whether if *Jesus* had gone up to the Top of the House, and had wrought the Cure there, Mr. *W.* would have had the Crowd follow him there too? if not, then the Miracle would have been wrought upon the Paralytick before a very few Witnesses: Whereas *Jesus* by suffering the Sick Man and his Bed to be brought down into the Room, gave an Opportunity to all that were Present of seeing a *Real* and *Great* Miracle wrought: In this View then *Jesus* certainly did what was *consistent with* his *Wisdom* and his *Honour* too, for he thereby manifested his Glory, and made a greater Display of the Divine Power that was with him: Nor can it be doubted,

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but that, if *Jesus* had taken the contrary method, and had gone up to the Roof, as Mr. *W.* expects he should have done, Mr. *W.* would have found a much greater Difficulty in that, and have ask'd with more colour of Reason, Why *Jesus* depriv'd so many of his Hearers of the Opportunity of seeing so stupendous a Miracle wrought? and probably he would have concluded, that his healing the Man not before the Company, but upon the House-top, where only the Sick Man's Friends were present, carried with it strong marks of Fraud and Imposture.

UPON the whole then of this Story, it appears to be so far from being *the most monstrously Absurd, Improbable, and Incredible of any, according to the Letter* (as he calls it, p. 51.) that I can find no one Absurdity in it, but what arises from his Misrepresentations of it.

IN the same manner, in which I have consider'd these Two Miracles, I might proceed to consider the Rest: but I have not Leisure enough for the Work, and perhaps the Reader by this time may be satisfied with the Controversy: The Miracles, which I have singled out for Enquiry in This and the Preceding Parts, are such as I judg'd to have something of Difficulty in them, and not to have been sufficiently explain'd in all their Circumstances by our Ablest Commentators; who in so large an Undertaking, as Theirs commonly is, had neither Room nor Time to enter into the minuter Disquisitions. But I have examin'd every Particular of the Literal Account of those Miracles, and I can assure the Reader, that in all the Testimonies of Authors, which I have made use of, to support and confirm my Opinions, the Original has always been consulted, and no Trust has been given to Quotations at the second hand: I have seen enough to convince me, that Writers of Great Repute for Learning are not always to be depended upon in this Case, and therefore to the Fountain I went; for which reason, if at any time I quote Authors in a different manner, or a different Sense from what the Reader may have found them elsewhere quoted in, it is hoped, that he will give me Credit so far as to take my Word, or refer himself to the Original for greater Certainty.

AT present I have no Intention to pursue this Subject any farther; I would only request the Reader to consider two Things: The one, that the Reality of *Jesus's* Resurrection having been prov'd by uncontestable Evidence, by all the Evidence that a Fact is capable of, nay, by such as no other past Fact in Nature ever could receive, it requires no Stretch of Faith to believe, that he wrought other Miracles, which are to all human Appearance of a less Difficult Nature; for to heal a Lame or a Blind man, or to raise a Dead man, has nothing

so Inconceivable in it, as for a Man to raise Himself from the Dead: And if This be prov'd to have been done, the Other must be readily admitted for a Truth, whatever little Circumstances there may be in the Story, which an Ignorant Man may not understand, or a Perverse one may be able to misrepresent.

THE other thing, which I wou'd request the Reader to consider, is This; Mr. *W.* has set before him fifteen of the Miracles ascrib'd to *Jesus*, and by his Management of them has represented them as the most *Absurd*, *Improbable*, and *Incredible* Stories that ever were deliver'd. Now let the Reader take all of them in this one View; and consider whether it be in the least Probable, that such Authors as the Evangelists are (certainly neither downright Fools nor downright Mad-men), in their Accounts of what they declare upon their own Knowledge and Eye-sight, could possibly be guilty of so many Absurdities as Mr. *W.* has charg'd their Narrations with. They either meant to write the Truth of Facts, or they did not: If the First, then we may ask, whence it happen'd that Men, writing about what they saw, could fall into such Mistakes as Mr. *W.* supposes they did? But if they knowingly wrote Falshoods, it may be ask'd again, how it came to pass, that they, who intended to deceive, took no more care to secure their Credit, and make their Account Probable? Deceivers (one would naturally think) should contrive to make their Story hang together, and should mention no Circumstances but what they know to be consistent with the Customs and Manners of those, who were concern'd in it. The ordinary way to detect Men of this Character, is to find out that their Contemporaries, who might be as well acquainted with the Facts mention'd as Themselves, have given Accounts, either Inconsistent with or Contradictory to Theirs: But he must be a wretched Impostor indeed, whose Story so plainly confutes itself, as Mr. *W.* thinks those of the Evangelists do: To suppose this, is to suppose them the very Weakest of Writers and of Men too. And how far they deserve that Character, must be left to the Judgment of every Impartial Reader of their Writings. We see then that Mr. *W.* overthrows all Probability on his Side of the Question, by endeavouring to prove too much: he allows nothing to be Right, all is *Falshood*, all is *Absurdity*; and yet there can be no greater *Absurdity* in Nature (I think) than in believing, that Men of Sense, who intended to Deceive, took no more pains to give a Colour to their Story, but left it Open and Expos'd to all the Objections which the Pen of Mr. *W.* has made against them.

THIS I mention as a strong Presumption against what he has advanc'd: But when it is farther consider'd what Answers I
and

and others have given to his suppos'd *Absurdities*, I hope that every Unprejudic'd Infidel will give a Fair hearing; and that every Serious Christian will be the better confirm'd in his Belief, that *the Literal Account of all the Miracles of Jesus is True*, and that they are a Demonstration, that the *Power of God was with him*.

F I N I S.



